

TamilWeek



A Print View of Accents found, Surfing

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Canadian Edition of TamilWeek.com-A PARFAIT MEDIA PUBLICATION

"And all people live, Not by reason of any care they have for themselves, But by the love for them that is in other people."- Leo Tolstoy, Russian Novelist (1828-1910)

Hon. Alan Rock to Sri Lanka on UN Fact finding mission



Former Canadian Minister, appointed as UN Special Advisor
Story on Page 3



The memory of hundreds of Tamils killed during the Black July of 1983 was kept alive at Dundas Square, Toronto on July 24, 2006
Details on Page 24 [Pic: Sankathi.com]



7,000 Tamil Pilgrims gathered at Midland Martyr's Shrine on July 15th, 2006

Photos, History on Page13

On the Rhodes to Success

Recent Engineering Grad Wins Prestigious Scholarship to Study at University of Oxford

BY LORI BONA HUNT Story on Page 17



Praying for Permanent Peace

"My husband, from Pooneryn and a farmer - passed away. I am now living with my sister in Chetty street in Jaffna. I have three children. They are all married and settled abroad. I come daily to the Nallur Kandasamy temple to pray for permanent peace" says Rajasundari Ratnasabapathy (78) in Nallur.
[humanityashore.org]



Sivaji stands tall

Story on Page 14



At play in welfare camp for recently displaced from Allaipiddy. Children from Allaipiddy do not attend school due to displacement.
Details on Page 17



Nallur Kandasamy Koyil annual festival flag hoisting takes place on July 30th. The festival continues on for 25 days
[humanityashore.org]

Tamil "Top Doctor wins two awards"

Story on Page 16



India and LTTE: "Out of the box"

By K.T. Kumaran - Story on Page 5

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Community

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All lands home, all men kin.

Earth's Bounty
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valley,
or hill.
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as the good young men
in each place

Auvaiyar - Purananooru 187

To place community and non profit organization news submit by email to: toronto@tamilweek.com or tamilweek@tamilweek.com

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Canada-Sri Lanka Business Council had the official opening of their new office at 220,Duncan Mills building complex recently. Among the distinguished guests present at the opening were Ms. Maria Minna - Canada's former Minister for International Co-operation, Mr. Karunaratne -Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in Canada, Mr. Poolokasingham -Sri Lankan Consul General in Toronto and other leading members of the Business and Banking sectors in Toronto. The official opening was followed by a lunch at the Crown Plaza Hotel.

Colombo Hindu College Bambalapitiya had their Annual inter-house cricket tournament at Hendry Hudson senior public school grounds on 23rd July 2006. Past students from Canada and United States were presented at this event. 'Kambar' house team became the winner of the tournament.



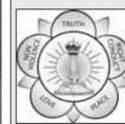
Golden Oldies' Ninaitthale Inikkum 2006 in Toronto



Popular playback singers TM Soundararajan, P Suseela, PB Srinivas, AL Ragavan, K Jamunarani, TMS Selvakumar, Ananthkrishnan, Jr AM Rajah, Jr Srinivas along with Mellisai Mannar MS Viswanathan participated in a grand musical event NINAITHTHALE INIKKUM 2006, on July 15th at Air Canada Centre presented by Canada Thamilosai Radio.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Tamil Students' Association from The University of Toronto at Mississauga is proud to announce that they will be holding their 5th annual Kalai Vizha: " Suvadukal 2006 " on July 29th 2006 at the Hammerson hall in The Living Arts Centre. UTM TSA would like to cordially invite you to their Kalai Vizha and also extend their invitation to your family and friends. For more information, please visit www.suvadukal.com or call them at 416-548-8040. Tickets are only \$10 and they are now available for sale. For tickets available at different locations, please check out the Suvadukal website. If you have any questions/concerns, please contact them at info@suvadukal.com



ONTARIO TAMIL CULTURAL &ARTS CENTRE PRESENTS ATHMA GEETHAM- 2006

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with
'Mirudanga Vidwan', 'Kalaimamani' Thiruvavarur Baktha vathsalam
&
Violin Vidwan Vittal Ramamoorthy

Venue: Peter & Paul Banquet Hall, 231 Milner Avenue(Markham & Milner),Scarborough

Date: August 7, 2006 Monday 5.30 p.m.

For More info: 416-609-2525/416-590-0966
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Maththiya Theepam

Jaffna Central College Old boys' Association, Canada Branch celebrated recently one hundred years of the founding of the Old Boys' Association in Jaffna. The President of the Association Dr.K.Theivendirarajah, a former Professor of Botany University of Jaffna in his welcome address remarked that the evening's Variety entertainment Maththiya Theepam was organized to celebrate this historic event.

He further said that the old boys of Central must be proud to be part of a 190 year old school with a 100 year old tradition of an Alumni Organization, a distinction in the history of Northern Sri Lanka.

He also mentioned in his speech that 2006 is a special year in Central illustrious history because of the 100th cricket encounter between Central and St.Johns colleges.

The Association honoured one of their distinguished old boys, the well known Tamil Cinema , Radio and Drama artiste K.S. Balachandran. He was awarded the

title of Palkalai Venthan and. Dr.Theivendirarajah introduced Palkalai Venthan K.S. Balachandran to the audience and was greeted with cheers.

The show turned out to be a great success with many dances - both classical and modern, a comedy by Balachandran and the music was provided by the Mega Tuners. The show was sponsored by old boys of Central-namely, Siva Kanapathipillai, Professor Thiagalingam Kirubarajan and Ketheswaran Sivarajapillai and they were honoured with appreciation awards.



President with Distinguished Guests & Old Boys of Jaffna Central College

(Photos: Gnane)



President with Sponsors of the Event-Old Boys of Central College

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“ அனைவருக்கும் இங்கு ஒரே சூயிற் அதனால் என்றும் மனிதனாயிரு ”
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New Hospital opens in Kilinochchi

The inauguration ceremony of the new General Hospital in Kilinochchi district, was held Monday 10, July 2006 at 11.30 a.m. presided by Kilinochchi district health services officer, Dr. Nandakumar, sources in Kilinochchi said. The hospital building on the main A9 Road in Anandapuram, Kilinochchi built with Rs. 600m funding assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) was opened by Deputy Head of Liberation Tigers Political Wing, S. Thangan who was the chief guest. The first phase of 200 beds, of a planned 600 bed facility, is now in operation and open to the public, hospital sources said.

The opening event began with a ceremonial parade led by traditional Tamil music band with dignitaries and guests taken in procession round the main hospital complex.

The new General hospital has both Out-patient and In-patient departments complete with Pediatric, Maternity, Surgical, Public Health and Disease Control sections, a Pharmacy and a Dental clinic in addition to research facilities and a blood bank.

Dr. S. Kuharajah welcomed the dignitaries, guests, doctors, employees and the public followed by an address by S. Thangan.

Dr. K Nandakumar said the decision to

build a hospital in Kilinochchi was made by a previous Kilinochchi district health services officer, Dr. Sathiamoorthy and the Government Agent (GA) Mr. Rasanayagam with a proposal for funding from ADB.

He complimented Mr. Illankanesan a project director in NECORD for his perseverance in completing the present first phase in record time. He expressed his hopes that the two future phases of the planned 600 bed facility will be completed without much delay.

Dr. Nandakumar said that furniture for the new facility from NECORD and the promised delivery of medical equipment by the Canadian Red Cross would arrive soon as anticipated.

The new General hospital formally opened by Mr. S Thangan Deputy Head of Liberation Tigers Political Wing, with the cutting of the ribbon.

Dr. Nandakumar stated that the most pressing issue facing the hospital is the shortage of doctors.

He requested the GA to make arrangements for medical specialists to make regular visits to the facility. Without the needed doctors patients have to suffer the inconvenience of travelling to the Jaffna General Hospital or to the Vavuniya Hospital. Ambulances are forced to make five to six trips a day, he said.

He praised nursing staff and other hospital employees for their dedication in enabling existing hospitals to provide adequate levels of medical services during difficult times. He said the GA should take appropriate action to improve the facilities in these hospitals to bring them on par with the new hospital.

He cited the absence of a geriatric facility as one of the shortcomings.

Earlier Dr. Nandakumar presented the hospital document, also at the opening the first patient to the new facility was given treatment.

Mr. Nandakumar said for the new hospital to function effectively cooperation of the people as well as the staff from other supporting sectors is crucial. (TamilNet)



The Tamil Eelam flag raised by the president of the Chamber of Commerce Mr. Vetriarasan. [TamilNet Photo]



Alan Rock going to Sri Lanka on UN fact-finding mission

Highlighting allegations of "grave violations" against children by all parties in the conflict, United Nations Special Representative for Children affected by armed conflict said today she was appointing a Special Adviser to undertake a fact-finding mission to Sri Lanka.

Alan Rock, the erstwhile Canadian UN Ambassador and Justice Minister in the



Hon. Allan Rock

Chrétien Government, was appointed today to this task by Radhika Coomaraswamy, UN Special Representative.

Radhika Coomaraswamy said LTTE "continues to recruit and use child

Former Canadian Minister, appointed as UN Special Advisor

soldiers and the office has also received reports that the Karuna faction has abducted and recruited children under the age of eighteen."

She added, "besides recruitment of child soldiers, there are also allegations of other grave violations against children by all parties to the conflict," expressing deep concern about the deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka.

Ambassador Rock has served as the Canadian Ambassador to the UN from 2004 to June 2006. During his short term in New York, Rock has built a solid reputation as a mediator and problem-solver who helped to push through such contentious issues as the responsibility to protect people who are subjected to atrocities, disciplinary measures for countries that force children into their armies as soldiers, and the creation of a new Human Rights Council.

Early in the spring when Ambassador Rock was asked about his intentions to run for the Federal Liberal leadership, he said "I've considered it and discussed it with my family, and we've decided that there are many

ways to serve Canada and I am not going to take part in the leadership race."

On the eve of his departure from his current position as Canada's UN Ambassador, Allan Rock told the Toronto Star: "The UN is in trouble on many fronts, we have to find a way to address the North-South gap, to encourage the big powers to abandon unilateral approaches and work collectively — that's in the interest of everyone, including them."

According to a UN news release the dates of Ambassador Allan Rock's trip would be finalized in consultation with Sri Lanka's Government, UN partners and others.

Govt of India "notes" LTTE regret

After the LTTE's Anton Balasingham told recently that they "regretted" assassinating Rajiv Gandhi, the government has acknowledged it in parliament.

Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahmed, in a response to a question, mentioned the government had "noted" LTTE's regret, said the NDTV, in a news bulletin on July 26th.

However, the minister added that the LTTE continues to be a proscribed organisation and its leaders "proclaimed offenders" in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.



The children of Muttichchenai watch as their mothers being trained on self-defence [Pic: HuamanityAshore]



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Sri Lanka: Land of the protected

By J. Nikhil Mustafa

Lakshman Kadirgamar was assassinated by a sniper, whose location could have been foreseen by any amateur sleuth. He was protected by some of the best in the country. While we may sing many a praise, after he is gone, it is not going to bring him back. For his family, loss was immeasurable. Neelan, when he was assassinated, had a backup vehicle, where the door locks functioned from the outside. He too left behind a family grieving.

They were protected directly by the State.

Many years ago, on a weekend, the news reported the disappearance of Richard de Soyza. Subsequently found on Korallawella beach. His mother and maid witnessed the abduction from their home. No one was successfully convicted of the crime. In fact, it is said that the investigation was a farce. Though, thousands had disappeared before he did, it was said that his death was a turning point to highlight the murderous environment in which people lived, since he was quite well known and had influential friends.

CBK appointed a number of commissions of inquiry, to look into the disappearances. The narratives of 35,000 disappearances were deposited before the commissions. Most, if not all of the deaths, were the result of the culture of impunity. Our culture dictates customs that mourn death and put souls at rest. For the families of the disappeared, that is not possible, since there is no such finality. 4000 persons are, reportedly, missing in action. The tale of incomplete rituals is the same here. This chapter in our history, has been fatal for us as a country. It meant, sanctioned extrajudicial killings and the killers were protected actors!

There have been many more tales. However, it's this legacy, which made possible the killing of five youths on the beach, in Trincomalee. Evidently, three have bullet wounds to their heads, indicating a one style of executions. Two had wounds elsewhere. Amnesty International has sought information on the whereabouts of eight youths who were last seen in a temple.

The Alaipiddy incident had eight dying in a very controlled area. The Bishop, in a comment published yesterday, alludes to conscription, in a government held area, by a group not aligned to the LTTE. A couple, who sought asylum and received it through an in-country process, had rung yesterday, to inquire how two of their brothers, who are under constant threat of conscription, could possibly seek safety in another country.

The two boys do not know who is after them. Last week, in Pesalai, the people who sought shelter from fighting, saw a grenade being flung, in addition to shooting which injured them.

The Kebbitigollawa mine attack was an indescribable horror. The Human Rights Task Force, the forerunner to the current Commission, in a report, narrated how persons were loaded into a truck, never to be seen again, even though, hundreds witnessed the departure.

A Chinese restaurant, where the current

Cricket Club is, was once stormed, reportedly, by well connected personnel in the heart of Colombo. These are tales of one side of protection of the same coin.

Another side ensures all citizens are protected from deprivation. The Finance Ministry, in a thought provoking document released last year, classified deprivation in the form of poverty, into a number of categories.

The poorest of the poor and the less poor

This segment accounts for 23% of the population in the country. Ten percent is chronically poor. Both need support through public cash transfer schemes. About 10-15% of the population, who are above the poverty lines, but close to it, need to be supported with Credit Schemes and other Programmes such as, Micro-financing, Income Generating Activities and Community Infrastructure Rehabilitation. Poor households in the conflict affected North-East, need to be recognised separately and supported under ongoing Rehabilitation Programmes.

We in Sri Lanka have not lived up to the promises enshrined in the Constitution. We ask people to vote, carry NICs, have national passports and call ourselves citizens of Sri Lanka. What do some get in return for such obedience? The testimony, in many instances in Sri Lanka, is its failure to protect. Protection which enables freedom for development, is what good governance should give us.

Youth

This targets youth above 18 and under 35 years, to enhance their income, where, currently, there is insufficient income for their livelihoods through public, private and people's sectors.

Differently Abled Poor

The 2001 Census identifies 274,711 as being differently abled (excluding the North-East). Of these 58% are males and 42% are females. About 32% have never attended school.

The Conflict Affected Poor

The earlier narratives have indicated the impact. Hence, poverty in the North-East, is experienced differently, whilst Peace is key to reducing conflict related poverty.

The Tsunami Poor

There is an overlap between normal poverty and Tsunami affected poverty. In certain areas, where resettlement and area-wise infrastructure provisions are involved, there will be several additional reconstruction interventions.

Women and Children

Women constitute 51% of the population. Unemployment among women is 22% and is double that of men and where employed, mostly at the bottom of the pyramid, find jobs,

usually, in low status, low skilled and low paying areas. Most of the jobs are in unorganized and informal sectors. They represent 76% of unskilled migrant labour. Poor women can be categorised into female heads of households, subdivided as (a) Non-widows and

(b) Widows/Separated/Divorced/Elderly and Disabled women.

Non-Widows

An estimated 20% of households are headed by females (one in every five). The urban sector has 23.4%, while the estate sector has 17.3%. Mainly, issues include financial instability, poverty and irregular low wage employment.

Widows, Separated / Divorced Women

Widows constitute 65% of female heads of households in Sri Lanka. About 19,000 are War widows and relatively young. Most are impoverished, deprived of social security and family support. Their children too, are isolated, often in unhealthy conditions, sexually and physically abused, and without inheritance rights to property. Many widows are hounded from their homes and denied access to essential resources such as, shelter, food, clothing and clean water. They have no social status and standing, and are denied loans to start gainful employment.

Elderly Women

The country's old age dependency ratio has progressively increased over the last 20 years and is expected to double over the next 20 years. Retirement systems, currently cover 25% of Sri Lanka's working age population; the vast majority of the population does not have formal social protection for old age. Further, of those who are covered, a large proportion are located in the top two income quintiles, suggesting that Sri Lanka's retirement system does not adequately meet the needs of the poor. A large proportion of those not covered are outside the labour force, the majority (70%) of them are women.

Disabled Women

These comprise one of the most neglected segments of the population. Most are unemployed, isolated, marginalised and considered a burden and objects of pity. Disability imposes upon them greater vulnerability.

Children

Children under 18 years constitute 36% of the population, infants 1.6% and those under four 7.2%, making a total of 8.8% under five.

In front of Odel and the mosque at Town Hall in Colombo, passing motorists can see little children defecating, bathing and dressing for school from the pavement on which they sleep at night. It's a convention that children have a right of protection, which should give them a life of dignity and security, as do all citizens in a country which promises democracy.

In South Africa, one of the judges of the Supreme Court, had interpreted a

provision in the constitution to ensure all had a right to housing, in a case on the indignity of living in tin shacks.

The Nepali constitution had the Right to Life enshrined in it but the turmoil, recently, was testimony to failure. For now, it seems, they will, together, write up a new constitution.

The history though, is of bad governance, notwithstanding a very good constitutional framework.

Yash Ghai, a reputed scholar, due back for a lecture soon, in an address in Geneva, had spoken of the promise of a constitution to its citizens. We in Sri Lanka have not lived upto those promises. We ask people to vote, carry NICs, have national passports and call ourselves citizens of Sri Lanka.

What do some get in lieu of such obedience?

For a family in Mannar, where the husband and two children had died of hanging in their own little home, having returned from India, where they had been refugees, the woman in the family had been gang raped and found dead.

In her last moments alive, what failing promises of our Constitution would she have not seen?

When the youth on the beach were being executed, what thoughts would have crossed their minds? For their parents, justice may never be given. Manorani, mother of Richard de Soyza, did not either, though people with knowledge of how he died, may still be around.

For the people of Sampoor, who get bombed, each time the LTTE plays truant, what crime was it they committed in being born Sri Lankan?

It is said that 43 meetings were held between the UPFA and the UNP, where agreement was found on 95% of what they discussed for constitutional reform, except, evidently, the option of a third term for a President.

When the All Party Conference members munch their crisp samosa, sandwiches and sip tea in fine china, they do not have the courage to disclose what has gone on before?

Nepal hid its head in the sand, pretended there was a passing rebellion. Horror of failures finally caught up on the rulers and they are now compelled to redraw the map on governance.

The testimony, in many instances in Sri Lanka, is its failure to protect. Protection which enables freedom for development, is what good governance should give us. [DailyMirror]



Picture [humanityAshore.org]



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India and LTTE: "Out of the box"

By K.T. Kumaran

"We cannot always assure the future of our friends; we have a better chance of assuring our future if we remember who our friends are," is the mind of the doyen of international diplomacy, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger.

For India in the midst of its emergence as a future global powerhouse and wanting to do that in a conflict free regional environment, the Tamils in the island nation off of its Southern tip are natural allies. In fact no other people in the region would look to India with such deep seeded close ties and affection. The umbilical connection of "Mother India" and "Eelam Tamils", severed only in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

However, response to comments made by LTTE Theoretician to an Indian TV network calling for close relationship



Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

between India and LTTE on June 27th is largely negative from the government of India, Congress Party and to the editorials of the nations' prominent dailies.

The responses are tragically addressing the "LTTE" as still being at the central issue and very little attention is being given to see that the implications of this estrangement policy is hurting all Tamils.

The Tamils in the island nation simply want their political rights and dignity. However, emotions are in the way of making rational decisions (rightfully perhaps) towards a new era. This eventually will hinder chances to bring about a speedy negotiated political settlement for Tamils of North-East.

Many primary political parties in Tamil Nadu have not forwarded responses as of yet. However, the tone seems to be set from elsewhere around India.

The Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) member, Mr Shantaram Naik is urging Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, "not to forgive the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for the brutal killing of the late prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi." Mr Naik, who is also a secretary of the All India Congress Committee and in-charge of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Lakshadweep, in a letter to Dr Singh is being quoted in the press, have said that "India and Indians are magnanimous in their approach over several issues, but not over an issue like the Rajiv Gandhi killing."

In searching through the tenet of Henry A. Kissinger's foreign policy realism, one would find that many a times he had said that nations act in their self-interest. Their diplomacy is driven not by emotion or abstract moral principle or past practice, but by the bedrock of mutual interest.

Even though some reports are indicating this as a "clever move" by LTTE leader Dr. Balasingham to confuse the people, the LTTE wouldn't have been anticipating a fairy tale ending to this issue in the aftermath of the interview either. However, a dialogue on this basis has to take place for the mutual benefit of all those who yearn a peaceful settlement to the crisis in the island country. Especially important will be stand by Tamil Nadu in the coming months. But LTTE too will have to make several more actions that may be viewed favorably in the international arena. Gestures have to be made thinking "outside the box".

Dr. Kissinger, as the 56th Foreign Secretary of the United States played a crucial role in the 1972 talks with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai that concluded with the "opening" of China and the formation of a new strategic anti-Soviet Sino-American alliance.

The Octogenarian Statesman, speaking recently on Iran developing Nuclear technology, emphasized, "Iran must realize that its national interest doesn't conflict with ours. If the Iranian concern is security and development of their country, this is compatible with American interests." Connecting to the global economy could soon make it a regional economic powerhouse, comparable to South Korea he argued.

The struggle by Tamil people for political rights in the island nation is nothing new to India. It was a birth defect, starting from the

disfranchisement of the tea plantation workers at a stroke of a pen by the government of Sri Lanka's first Prime Minister D.S. Senanyake.

Colombo has gone thru many a facades of leadership, from SWRD Bandaranaike, Junius Richard Jayawardane, Ranasinghe Premadasa, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge and now Mahinda Rajapakse. In each occasion except during the unfortunate 'estrangement' period while CBK was in office, India was/will be checkmated one way or the other, with the Tamils islandwide shouldering the brunt of the consequences.



Nrupama Rao Indian Ambassador & Mahinda Rajapakse

For India, there is no compelling reason to put full faith in Colombo that fails to uphold pluralism and secularism and virtually has no separation of religion and state in its day to day governing; the continuing shadow war targeting civilians and systematic drive away of Tamils from Trincomalee for example are by design in the long run would pave Colombo to navigate freely in the ocean and chose its allies and future destiny.

But in India, "it is not an absence of religions but the presence of religious pluralism," is the concept of secularism, according to her nominee for the UN Secretary General, Shashi Tharoor. Tamils of the island too are the kind that's enthralled in the song of Tamil poet of the Pre-Christinan Sangham era Kaniyan Poongundranar's "Yaathum Oore, Yaavarum Kelir" which the renowned Catholic Tamil Scholar Rev Fr. Xavier Thaninayagam translated as "All the world is my world, all humanity is my fraternity".

Addressing the United Nations in 1980,

former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi provided a sense of pride to the Tamil people all over the world when she quoted these memorable lines of Kaniyan Poongundranaar.

The amity of the Tamils of the island is in line with India's vision of emerging as an economic powerhouse. The only country with a vast ocean named after it, sure deserves to have this century named after her too.

Still take another example, the 40th President of the USA, President Ronald Reagan, calling Libya as a "pariah nation" and hence bringing the Tamil word "Pariah" into the American political lexicon. This happened in the aftermath of a 1988 terrorist bombing of Panam Airlines over Lockerbie, Scotland which killed 270 people

including many Americans.

Families of some victims still being opposed, Washington conducted several years of secret negotiations, and few weeks ago, full diplomatic ties have been established between the two countries. Many mutual interests are being touted between the countries, starting from access to oil fields.

Every situation around the world of course is different.

It remains to be seen if the LTTE Theoretician Dr. Balasingham's move is a pinnacle of his astuteness. The LTTE leader at many times has outsmarted rivals at the negotiating table by his wit and vigor, the very latest being at the Chateau de Bossey past Spring.

May be he is taking cue from Dr. Henry A. Kissinger in being "out of the box".

Based on just opened publication by the National Security Archive, Dr. Kissinger as a diplomatic emissary was almost "recklessly frank - gossiping, teasing, wheedling and flattering".



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Rajiv's murder and its aftermath

By D. B. S. Jeyaraj

Fifteen years ago on May 21st, Rajiv Gandhi was killed at a place called Sriperumbhudoor in Tamil Nadu. He was not prime minister then. An election campaign was going on to elect a new Lok Sabha or parliament. The Congress led by Rajiv Gandhi was the front runner. After Rajiv's death it was a Congress government that assumed office under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. Death came in the form of Dhanu, a young Tamil woman from



Sri Lanka.

Dressed in a churidar she came up to the smiling Rajiv and garlanded him. The chubby, dark - skinned, bespectacled girl then bent low to touch his feet as a mark of respect. Then came the explosion. A bomb strapped to her body was triggered off. Rajiv Ganhi was no more. Eighteen died and many others were injured in the suicide bomb attack.

The date of Rajiv Gandhi's death has poignant significance for me. May 21 was my birth day. Thereafter his memory looms large on each birthday. My birth and his death which happened 37 years later are inter-twined in my consciousness. It is hard to believe that 15 years have passed since his death.

I recall discussing Rajiv's death with Frontline Editor Narasimhan Ram on the telephone. Both of us did not believe then that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were responsible. It was a time when influential journalists in Chennai were trying hard to bring about rapprochement between Rajiv and the LTTE. The well-known Tamil poet Kasi Anandan (Kathamuthu Sivanandan) had met Rajiv Gandhi in March that year. The London based financial consultant Arjuna Sittambalam had met Rajiv some weeks later. Both were regarded as pro-Tiger emissaries.

It appeared that the stage was being set for some kind of political reconciliation. The Indian establishment at that time was more angry with Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa for booting out the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) than the LTTE, which fought the Indian army. Earlier Rajiv had told 'Murasoli' Maran that he was prepared to discuss even a de facto Eelam with the LTTE if necessary.

Tigers responsible

It was against this backdrop that we felt the LTTE would not have committed this murder. I wrote an article then for Frontline in which I argued the pros and cons. It was overwhelmingly against the chances of the Tigers being responsible. Yet I ended the piece with the line that if the LTTE was indeed responsible the ultimate losers will be the losers. Sathasivampillai Krishnakumar alias 'Col' Kittu then in London argued passionately with me that the Tigers were not responsible.

He sincerely believed then that his movement was not responsible. It was Kittu acting at the behest of his leader who was instrumental in sending emissaries to meet Rajiv Gandhi. He



was doing so because Velupillai Pirapaharan had ordered him to do so. I was quite close to Kittu then and played a minor role in these efforts. Though I had been critical of Rajiv Gandhi and the IPKF earlier, the wisdom of hindsight had made me realise that the Tamils could not afford to be alienated from India in the long term.

Alas! All those hopes and the efforts of those Indian journalists who in association with Kittu arranged for the meetings with Rajiv were all dashed when it became clearly established that the Tigers were responsible for the killing. What has happened thereafter is a progressive estrangement between 'Mother' India and her 'Eelam' Tamil children. The people of Tamil Nadu in particular were hurt and angry.

Jayalalitha Jeyaram swept the polls in Tamil Nadu. The DMK regarded as being partisan towards the LTTE was vanquished. Only its Leader Karunanidhi managed to scrape through with a 800 vote lead. Jayalalitha followed a hard, strict policy towards Tamil refugees in the state. Even educational opportunities were restricted. Harassment became the order of the day. Thousands of Tamils

who preferred to live in Tamil Nadu because of the Tamil ethos reluctantly relocated to the west.

More importantly the Indian public mood changed. India had welcomed Tamil refugees in 1983 and looked after them. Now it was made known, they were unwelcome. Sri Lankan Tamils were regarded as having abused Indian hospitality. The LTTE was officially banned. Indian policy towards Sri Lanka changed. No longer was the welfare of Sri Lankan Tamils in Indian calculations. Having banned the LTTE India found itself unable to interact with the Tamils as it had done before. That situation prevails still though some improvement is there.

The LTTE had a golden opportunity to salvage the situation a little in April 2002 when Pirapaharan held his famous press conference in Kilinochchi. When Indian journalists raised the issue of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination the LTTE leader could have been apologetic. Some remorse could have been displayed. This could have demonstrated that the killing was regretted and the Tigers were sorry. Instead Anton Balasingham called it a thunbiyal sambhavam (tragic incident) and asked journalists not to dig into it. This made the situation worse.



Most harmful act

The killing of Rajiv Gandhi was perhaps the single most harmful act inflicted upon themselves by the Tigers. Not only the Tigers but all Sri Lankan Tamils by extension were affected. Fifteen years later it remains as the biggest stumbling block to better relations between India and the Tamils.

I was in Jaffna when the IPKF - LTTE fighting began. I saw the atrocities and civilian killings first hand. When I returned to Colombo and exposed these in The Island I was arrested and detained. It was this and consequent harassment that made me leave Sri Lanka then.

There was a time when my relationship with the Indian High Commission people in Colombo was excellent. I was The Hindu correspondent then. Other Indian journalists used to call me the "blue-eyed boy" of the IHC. Yet my relationship soured because I criticised the IPKF, some aspects of the Indo-Lanka accord and Rajiv Gandhi. I was even fired by The Hindu for trying to expose IPKF rapes.

I was for some time very bitter about Rajiv Gandhi and the Indian role in Sri Lanka. But time changes things. Rajiv's assassination was a shock. However much one may be critical of a person no decent human being would want that person to die or worse still be killed in this gruesome fashion.

As time went on my thoughts about the Indian role and Rajiv Gandhi too began to change. Looking at the predicament of the Tamils now I feel that the Indo-Lanka accord with all its shortcomings would have been much better for Tamils in particular and Sri Lanka in general if it had been allowed to be implemented.

Indo-Lanka accord

The Indo-Lanka accord has provisions that changed Sri Lanka for the better. The accord recognised the reality of Sri Lanka being a multi-ethnic, multi-religious nation and not a mono-ethnic,

(Continued on page 10)



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“Balasingham aired the one and only view in the LTTE”

A columnist for Hindustan Times reports - it was felt in some Indian circles that Balasingham could be voicing his personal opinion regarding the death of Rajiv Gandhi, when he made comments to NDTV.

Some in India thought that in the LTTE, divergent opinions, views, and proposals could be publicly expressed.

But PK Balachandran in Colombo Diary, is writing to emphasize to the Hindustan Times readers that keen observers and experts view that these assumptions and theories are erroneous.

Full text of Hindustan Times article:

Balasingham, a foil for Prabhakaran

By PK Balachandran

Recently, when the chief negotiator of the LTTE, Anton Balasingham, supposedly apologised for the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, one of the questions raised in the highest Indian circles was whether he represented the voice of supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran.

It was felt that Balasingham could be voicing his personal opinion, and the interview he gave to the Indian TV channel might well be a desperate individual initiative to reach out to India at a critical time in the history of the LTTE when it was facing international isolation.

A related assumption was that in the LTTE, divergent opinions, views, and proposals could be publicly expressed.

But keen observers of the LTTE say that these assumptions and theories are erroneous.

The truth, according to them, is that no one in the LTTE ever publicly airs his personal views, and that on the question of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, Balasingham had only aired Prabhakaran's view, the one and only view in the LTTE.

Prabhakaran had said in his epoch making press conference in Kilinochchi on April 10, 2002, that he considered Rajiv Gandhi's assassination a "tragic event" and sought a rapprochement with India saying that the past should be forgotten.

The Tiger chieftain had cleverly dodged the question, which was, whether he would apologise to India for assassinating its leader.

What Balasingham said in the TV interview four years down the line, was pretty much the same. Neither Balasingham nor Prabhakaran had admitted to the crime or apologised for it.

The way the April 10, 2002 press conference was conducted showed how close the two were, and how identical their views were.

When journalists bombarded Prabhakaran with questions, Balasingham, the supposed translator, interjected and brazenly declared that he would take the questions. And when a foreign journalist protested, he declared: "My views and Prabhakaran's views are the same!"

Very significantly, there was not a

whimper of protest from the chieftain.

Different but complementary

This, of course, does not mean that Balasingham and Prabhakaran have no differences or have had no serious differences. But they have always made up, never bringing the differences out into the open.

Balasingham and Prabhakaran are completely different from each other, but they complement each other. Balasingham does what Prabhakaran cannot, and Prabhakaran does what Balasingham cannot.

Both are wedded to the core values, goals and techniques of the LTTE, though allowances are made for differences on peripheral matters.

And there has been a remarkable consistency. Others may have come and gone, but Balasingham has been with Prabhakaran, and that, in the inner circle, right from 1979, when the LTTE was still in its infancy.

Balasingham has the unique distinction of being the leader of the LTTE's negotiating team on every occasion barring the talks with the JR Jayewardene government in Thimpu in Bhutan in 1985; and the meeting with the Nordic monitors in Oslo on June 8 and 9, this year.

He could not go for the Oslo talks this time because of ill-health. And during the Thimpu talks, he was on the hotline acting as a link between Prabhakaran and the LTTE delegation.



Writing about the Balasingham-Prabhakaran relationship in her book *The Will to Freedom* (Fairmax Publishing Ltd Mitcham, England, 2001) his wife Adele Balasingham says: "The relationship between these two single-minded individuals has been unique.

It is one of those relationships where two different personalities come together at a specific juncture and play significant roles in the movement of history."



Anton Balasingham in Kilinochchi in Jan 2006

While Balasingham is the philosopher and the theoretician of the movement, Prabhakaran is the quintessential activist, and also the final decision maker.

Balasingham is the negotiator, with a preference for peaceful methods of conflict resolution based on compromise and step-by-step movement. But Prabhakaran, the warrior, pitches for the extreme and is uncompromising.

But there has been a fruitful division of labour between the two, by mutual, tacit consent.

"Bala" as Adele refers to him her book, is the political interpreter or translator of the LTTE's actions to the outside world, a tough task now, given the global hostility towards violent non-state actors and terrorists.

He is the interface with the genteel world, given his felicity with the English language, the gift of the gap, his wide reading, and his academic and journalistic background.

He is adept at handling political leaders, heads of governments, officials and journalists from across the globe.

In arguments, Balasingham can be reasonable and persuasive as well as intimidating, carping, and sarcastic when the occasion demands.

Prabhakaran, on the other hand, is shy and retiring. He speaks only Tamil. He also has strong views. But he determines the basic goals of the organisation, its basic strategies and tactics and is entirely in-charge of the military aspect of it.

Despite his privileged and unique place in the set up, Balasingham has never overstepped his limits and has always worked within the unwritten parameters of his relationship with the supremo.

"Bala has always viewed his role with the LTTE and the struggle as the advisor and theoretician to Pirabakaran and the organisation," writes Adele.

In line with the Tamil way, Adele spells the Supremo's name as "Pirabakaran" and not "Prabhakaran" as it is spelled generally in line with the Sanskrit original.

Balasingham has scrupulously avoided military matters because these are sensitive. In such matters, he will wait for Prabhakaran to brief him. And according to Adele, Prabhakaran would unfailingly brief him so that the required press releases could be written and the concerns of the outside world addressed.

Role of trust

"Trust" has been the basis of the relationship between the two.

Though holed up in a jungle hideout in the Wannai in north Sri Lanka, with little or no interaction with the world outside, Prabhakaran has never felt insecure vis-à-vis Balasingham, who, living in the UK for years, has the skills to interact with outsiders and has been in close touch with them.

Balasingham a foil

Prabhakaran has never feared that Balasingham may be weaned away from the fundamentals of the LTTE by "pernicious" outside influences.

"Bala's lack of concern for power, his preparedness to restrain his role to writing, teaching and advising, and his obvious commitment to the struggle, eventually made Bala the most reliable and trustworthy advisor to Pirabakaran," writes Adele.

Balasingham's willingness to speak the truth as he sees it, is appreciated by Prabhakaran. He will not utter a falsehood, simply to please Prabhakaran.

On this Adele writes: "One quality that Pirabakaran has admired and valued in Bala all these years, is his commitment to truth. Bala has always acted on the principle that he should convey accurate and truthful advise in the best interests of both Pirabakaran and the struggle."

"Whether Pirabakaran has always heeded the advice or was displeased by what he frankly conveyed, was not Bala's concern."

"As the advisor to Pirabakaran, Bala has many times told me, it was his duty to tell the truth, regardless of how unpalatable it may be."



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Champion of Tamils' Rights - Dr. S. Ramadoss

by K.T. Kumaran

I never stopped speaking for the welfare of Eelam Tamils. In fact I continue to do it today, and my son and grandson too will be voices for them, said Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) founder Dr S Ramadoss today in New Jersey.

Dr. Ramadoss spoke at a welcome function organized by the World Tamil Organization of Chicago in honour of the PMK founder.

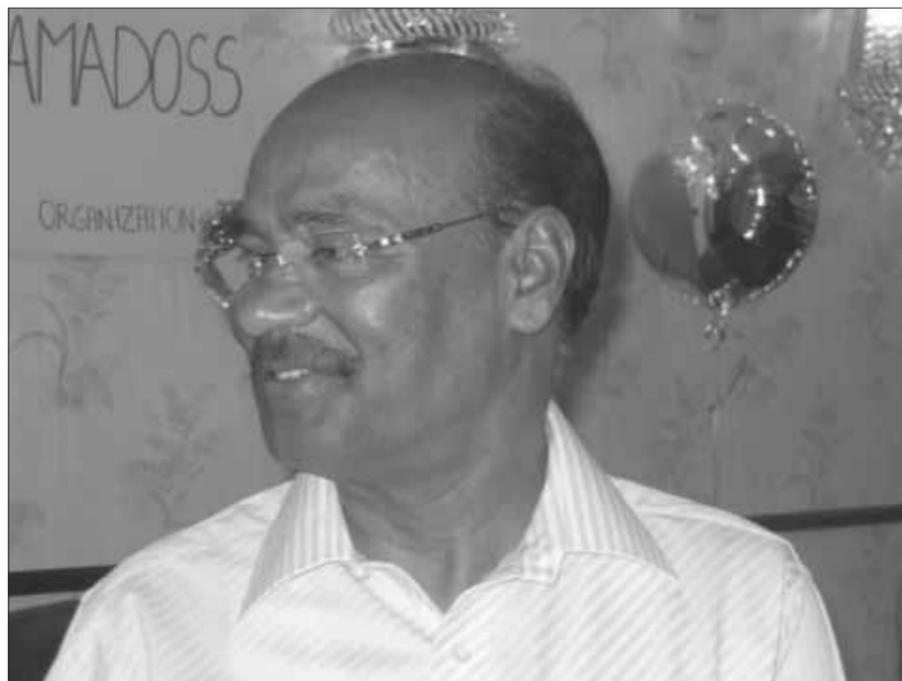
He stated that unlike during the governing by a "Madam" in the past ten years, the present Chief Minister M Karunanidhi wants to be helpful to the Eelam Tamils. Ours is an umbilical connection, but "Madam" never cared he quipped. 'Kalaingar' may be at odds with the militants over the past but he is very much eager of taking positive actions for the welfare of Eelam Tamils, affirmed Dr. Ramadoss. "Our duty is to increase this earnest desire", he said. And added he will never be reluctant to carry on his responsibilities.

Dr. Ramadoss said that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh too renders

favourable tendencies in acting towards the welfare of Tamils. But he said the Government of India is ill advised by top brass whose names he didn't want to reveal, since the time of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He also criticized the "people" who control the press for manipulating the public opinion and not bringing out the true plight of the Eelam Tamils.

Incidentally, he also said that PMK supported "Makkal TV" is scheduled to go on the air in August. PMK also has a daily Tamil newspaper, Tamil Osai, on its side, which recently hit the stands. Dr. S. Ramadoss quoted Eelam Poet Kasi Anandan, "there is no Thamizh here but only Thamingilam" (There is no Tamil here, only Tamilenglish) when chidingly speaking of the mass media's impact on culture.

Dr S Ramadoss said the supply of two radars to Sri Lanka by the Government



Dr. S. Ramadoss addressing the gathering in New Jersey on July 15



Dr. Ramadoss being honoured by Dr. M.N. Krishnan, co-chair of the celebrations committee of the recently concluded 2006 FETNA Conference.

of India was a 'big mistake'. He charged the Rajapakse government with blatant violation of human rights of Eelam Tamils and staging a ploy that Sri Lanka is a 'friend' of India.

Dr S Ramadoss said that a transparent Indo-Sri Lankan dialogue is essential in the future and anticipates similar transactions to cease in the future.

Dr. S. Ramadoss also spoke of his son Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss, who is the youngest Minister in the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's cabinet, in charge of Health receiving the Luther L Terry Award from the American Cancer Society.

The American Cancer Society has hailed India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as "a model to which other nations may aspire" and given it the award for Exemplary Leadership by a Government Ministry.

Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss received the Luther L Terry Award, named after a

former US surgeon general who authored a landmark 1964 report connecting tobacco use to lung cancer and other illnesses, at a special ceremony in Washington on Friday.

Dr. S. Ramadoss was bestowed the title, "Thamizhina urimai Kavalan" (Champion of Tamils' Rights) by the Chicago based World Tamil Organization. Dr. S. Ramadoss was honoured as a remarkable leader in enacting with boldness (thunniyu) like 'Thanthai' Periyar, having simplicity and intellect (ellimai & sinthanai) like 'Arignar' Anna and possessing 'Karmaveerar' Kamarajar's dedication and humanity (uzhaippu & ullam).

Eelam Tamils attending the function expressed their gratitude to Dr. S. Ramadoss and many Tamils from Tamil Nadu expressed their relief that a decade of fear even to express simple moral support to Eelam Tamils is behind them.

On wheels.....



A Colombo bound train from south is packed with the commuters. Most of the people travel by train to Colombo from other parts of the country to avoid traffic. [humanityashore.org]

Sri Lanka Muslims want early resumption of peace negotiation

The main political party for the minority Muslim community Sunday called for an early resumption of peace negotiations between the Tamil Tiger rebels and the Sri Lankan government.

Rauff Hakeem, leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), told reporters recently that his party was seriously concerned about the stalled nature of the Norwegian backed process aimed at ending the long drawn out separatist armed conflict.

Hakeem said the SLMC has its own proposals to resolve the conflict which would be presented to the two sides once the talks resumed.

"The Muslims need autonomy in the eastern province where they are a majority", the SLMC leader said.

The Tigers seek self rule for the combined north and east provinces

claiming the regions have been historical homeland of the minority Tamils.

But they have to contend with the problem of Muslim dominated pockets in the multi ethnic eastern province where all three communities the majority Sinhala, the Muslims and Tamils each enjoy the same status in terms of percentages of population.

Hakeem said his community was never consulted in the 1987 decision to merge the eastern province with the Tamil dominated northern province and in the event of a de-merger they need to be consulted.

The SLMC leader, who was a member of the government delegation at the previous rounds of talks with the Tigers, said the Muslims ought to be accorded separate status in the future negotiations.



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"Shops, Banks, Offices and Restaurants in the Capital's crowded City Centre and Main Streets being burnt while the Police look on. Thousands of houses ransacked and burnt, sometimes with women and children inside. Goon squads battering passengers to death in trains and on station platforms and, without hindrance, publicly burning men and women to death on the streets! Remand prisoners and political detainees in the country's top prison being massacred. The armed forces joining in and sometimes organizing this pogrom against members of Sri Lanka's two Sri Lankan minority communities. The nation's President and top ranking cabinet members publicly justifying the pogrom!"

- "Sri Lanka: The Holocaust And After" by L. Piyadasa. (Introductory paragraph)

The night of 23rd of July 1983, members of the Liberation tigers of Tamil Eelam ambushed an army patrol at the Post Box junction area in Thirunelvely and killed 13 soldiers. Troops went berserk in Jaffna in the hours that followed and shot dead 51 innocent civilians in the Jaffna Peninsula including 7 passengers in a minivan at Manipay. Some hours later on the Sunday that followed members of the Sri Lankan Navyman riot in Trincomalee burning down Tamil houses and also forcibly relocating Tamil refugees. In Colombo the powers that be decided to publish, broadcast and televise the news about 13 soldiers being killed by the Tigers while blacking out reprisals by the armed forces. In an even more inflammatory move it was decided to stage a mass funeral for the dead soldiers at Kanatte. The situation took a violent turn and as the Esala full moon shone brightly from a not so cloudy sky, clouds of smoke from burning Tamil establishments spiralled upwards. The following Monday 25th saw anti-Tamil violence spreading like wildfire. The plantation Tamil Patriarch Saumiyamoorthy Thondaman known for his pithy comments later described the violence that followed Poya as - "Sunday Sil, Monday Kill".

The violence went on for three days peaking on Wednesday 27th and ebbing



The plantation Tamil Patriarch Saumiyamoorthy Thondaman known for his pithy comments later described the violence that followed Poya as - "Sunday Sil, Monday Kill".

Another July Passing By

"The significance of Black July is distorted. Instead of being portrayed as the month denoting the pogrom against the Tamils "Black July" is now the month where the nation particularly the Sinhala majority is rendered cruelly vulnerable to LTTE violence."

By D.B.S. Jeyaraj



M. Sivasithampapam
"Thanks to the 6th amendment the Tamil Parliamentarians of the Tamil United Liberation Front also kept away thereby losing their seats."

on Thursday 28th the day that Indian Prime Minister sent then Foreign minister P. Narasimha Rao as her special emissary to Colombo. Friday 29th, saw Colombo and suburbs being terrified by the rumour that the Tigers had come to town. The afternoon of that fateful "Koti Dawasa" saw the goon squads massacring Tamils again after being "sure" that no tigers were in town. 30th and 31st July saw the violence diminish gradually. By August the violence had ceased as International opinion and pressure compelled the J.R. Jayawardene regime to "normalise" the situation.

In spite of the attempts to rationalise the July 1983 anti-Tamil violence as a "Sinhala backlash to 13 Soldiers being killed by Tamil Tigers" evidence uncovered during the past years have proved conclusively that "Black July" 1983 was a definite Pogrom and not a spontaneous reaction of the Tamils. Notwithstanding the efforts of then President Jayawardene to tarnish the Sinhala people as being collectively responsible for this carnage, respected observers such as Paul Sieghart of the International Commission of Jurists exposed the real state of affairs.

As Sieghart himself points out in his report (Sri Lanka: A Mounting Tragedy of Errors) "Clearly this (July 1983 attack) was no spontaneous upsurge of communal hatred among the Sinhala people - nor was it as has been suggested in some quarters, a popular response to the killing of 13 soldiers in an ambush the previous day by Tamil Tigers, which was not even reported in the newspapers until the riots began. It was a series of deliberate acts, executed in accordance with a concerted plan, conceived and organized well in advance".

The mass scale deaths, destruction, displacement, deprivation and despair

suffered by the Tamils both Sri Lankan and Indian made them characterise those days in July as a dark period in their life. The extent to which the Tamils were diminished in that month made them call it "Black July". The Tamil people were at a nadir of despondency. Yet, "Black July" also denoted a decisive shift in the politics of the Island. The bulk of the people affected in the violence were Tamils living outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces. With their hopes of living peacefully amidst the Sinhala people being blasted their future seemed bleak. Two trends started. One group of Tamils started relocating to the North and East. Another group migrated mainly as refugees. As the War escalated, expanded and enveloped the North and East Tamil People started moving out of the Island in even greater numbers.

When writing about "Black July" one is conscious of the negative connotations in using the colour "black" to describe something bad and evil and the colour white for pure and good. In this age of "political Correctness" these usages have been challenged and debunked as insidious vestiges of racism. Wittingly and unwittingly these usages keep promoting racist stereotypes of colour. Nevertheless it is difficult to adopt such a politically correct stance in the Sri Lankan context as the description "Black July" has pervaded national consciousness. Avoiding such reference would be particularly impossible in writing about the developments of July 1983.

The July 1983 pogrom saw more than a hundred thousand people fleeing to India as refugees thereby providing that Country with the necessary locus standi to intervene politically. India also encouraged the training and arming of Tamil youths. Thousands of youngsters flocked to the different militant movements. Thanks to the 6th amendment the Tamil Parliamentarians of the Tamil United Liberation Front also kept away thereby losing their seats.

The political leadership began passing slowly and surely into the militant youth hands. The economy of Sri Lankan was affected badly. The good name of the country was sullied irreparably. One of the lamentable features of that Pogrom was the abominable response of JRJ and senior ministers on Television. Not even one word was uttered in sympathy for the victims of the violence.

Black July 83 was a watershed in the contemporary history of the Island. Black July 83 aroused the conscience of many Sinhala people. Indeed it cannot



"Statue of Captain Miller, the first Black Tiger, embracing death on July 5th 1987"

be forgotten that a great deal of Tamils escaped danger to life, limb and property only because of the courageous protection extended by their Sinhala friends. There were well meaning efforts by several persons notable among which was the initiative taken by the Anglican Bishop of Kurunegala. Rt. Rev. Lakshman Wickremasinghe.

But as time progressed the riling elite was able to prosecute the war against the Tamils further. Anti-Tamil violence became legitimized and institutionalised as a military effort. The brutalisation of the war as well as some of the reprehensibly inhuman acts by the Tamil militant groups helped reduce the moral superiority of the Tamil cause and predicament. Gradually the pangs of remorse and guilt felt by Sinhala public opinion became lesser and lesser. This process has now subtly transformed that humane mindset into a negligible quantity.

Furthermore an insidious campaign has resulted in altering and undermining the significance of Black July 83 this campaign is two fold. Firstly the scope as well as the original implication of Black July has been altered. The past years have seen July being depicted as "Black" not for the 1983 anti Tamil Pogrom but for all the "bad" things that happened in July. The list is endless ranging from the 1987 Indo-Lanka accord to the latest act of violence in July. Thus July is now "black" because of the large number of violent incidents that occurred in that month. The original significance of it being called "Black July" to mark the horrible pogrom against the Tamils is systematically diluted. Historical revisionists may even obliterate this "original sin" and substitute some other event as being the cause for July becoming Black. Thereby the long term "guilt" effect of the anti Tamil holocaust of 1983 July on the Sinhala psyche will be alleviated perhaps eradicated in time to come.

The second aspect of this campaign is the demonising of an LTTE threat. The July 1983 violence as well as the phenomenon of Captain Miller, the first Black Tiger, embracing death on July 5th 1987 are used in a cunning roundabout way. The line trotted out is that the LTTE considers July as "Black" enough to warrant the perpetration of some terrible act of violence as symbolic defiance. So we see the media inundated with stories of how the

(Continued on page 11)

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(Continued from page 6)

Rajiv's murder

mono-religious entity as proclaimed by majoritarian chauvinists. It also ac

knowledged the north-east to be the historic habitat of the Tamils and Muslims.

The accord also brought about the north-east merger. It afforded official language status to Tamil. More importantly it brought about a scheme of devolution. The provincial councils were introduced because of the Indo-Lanka pact. The powers had to be reduced due to the tricky situation of getting it past the Supreme Court. The SC decision was five to four with three of those judges voting in favour coming from the minority communities.

The Indians had plans of enhancing devolution on a staggered basis. They had obtained an assurance in writing from President J.R. Jayewardene to that effect. One of the changes envisaged



was doing away with the concurrent list of powers. But then the provincial council was never allowed to function properly in the north-east. Today PCs are active in the Sinhala areas but not in the north-east for whose people it was mainly intended.

Best deal

I recall High Commissioner Dixit, Political Secretary Hardeep Singh Puri and information secretary Lakshmi Puri trying to convince me in discussions that the Indo-Lanka accord was the best possible deal that the Tamils could have obtained at that time. Historically it was the highest quantum of Tamil rights recognised by the Sinhala dominated state. 'Lets work it out and improve it further' they would say. But I would have none of it.

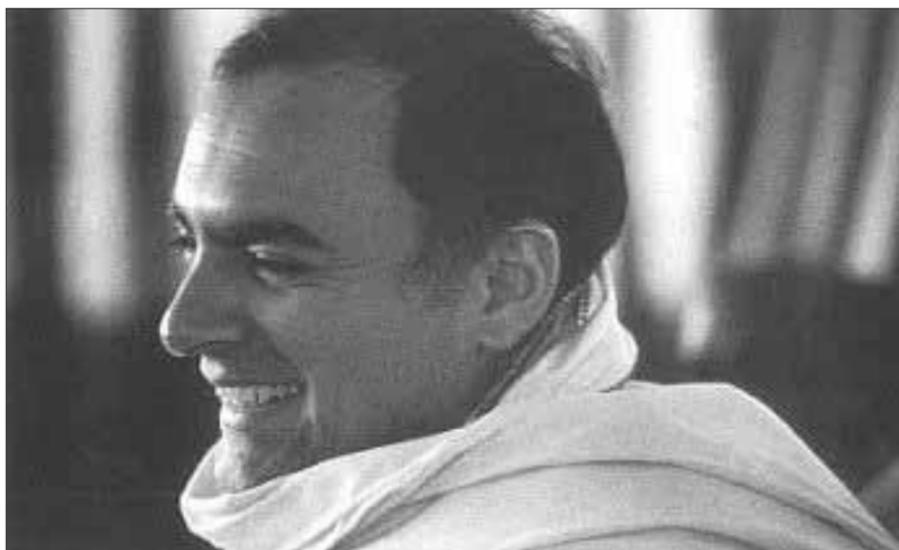
Appapillai Amirthalingam and I were engaged in a heated argument once about the Indo-Lanka accord. I remember him repeating again and again " I am telling you from experience. The Sinhala state will never accept our rights without outside intervention. We need India to help us. If the Indian army goes off before our rights are ensured our people particularly those in the east and Vavuniya will be finished."

Belatedly I realise the wisdom in those views. I too wanted the Indians out then. I was happy when the N-E provincial council was dissolved. But what has happened now? After years of strife and sacrifice the Tamil people have not achieved anything tangible. Multitudes have died or been maimed, the economy is shattered, people dispersed, values brutalised, culture eroded and dwellings destroyed. Yet the Tamils have nothing.

The LTTE may have built a military machine. But practically it is of no use other than to perpetuate misery and loss. Even the LTTE had lost only 611 cadres at the time of the Indo-Lanka accord. Today they have lost nearly 19,000. Compared to this situation the Indo-Lanka accord would have been better.

Was genuine

It is with this mindset therefore that I think of Rajiv Gandhi. Though critical of him then I realise now that he was trying to do the right thing by the Tamils and Sri Lanka. N. Ram the editor-in-chief of The Hindu was to tell me once that Rajiv Gandhi despite his blunders was genuine in trying to resolve the ethnic problem in Lanka. Other Indian journalists have told me that Rajiv really felt sorry for the Tamils and wanted to usher in a fair deal for



catapulted him into the prime minister's seat.

I was in India covering the momentous election of December 1984 when Rajiv Gandhi won with a landslide. It was the biggest margin of victory enjoyed by the Congress till then. With his handsome features and attractive smile Rajiv was India's darling. He brought modern methods into politics. Initially Rajiv with Arun Nehru and Arun Singh formed a trio at the helm. The three 'P's they were called (Pilotwalla, Polishwalla and Paintwalla).

Gandhi dynasty

Rajiv's mission was to take India into the 21st century. That was not to be but today India has entered that century

political settlements in the domestic sphere. One was the pact with Punjab Sikhs and the other the accord with Assamese student activists. It was in the wake of these agreements that he accelerated efforts to resolve the Sri Lankan crisis. He was a man in a hurry and people in a hurry often make mistakes.

He removed veteran G. Parthasarathy and sent the high flying Romesh Bhandari as his special envoy to Colombo. Rajiv made a significant departure from his mother's strategy when he brought in the militants for talks. Indira and GP kept the militants out and relied on the TULF alone for negotiations. Five militant groups were kept on par with the TULF at the Thimpu talks. Being in haste the originally envisaged extended time frame of the staggered ceasefire was telescoped into a short duration. The talks failed but due to this reason alone.

Later Rajiv got into a 'huff' with Foreign Secretary A.P. Venkateshwaran which led to the latter's resignation. This was a great loss as APV was fully cognisant with the Lankan issues. Then came Natwar Singh, P. Chidamparam and even Dinesh Singh as emissaries. In Colombo it was Dixit who did the spade work ably assisted by the Puris.

It was a matter of touch and go. Had Sri Lanka resisted the air drop of supplies by India history may have been different. Even if a de jure Eelam had not come into being a de facto Eelam like that of Turkish Cyprus may have been there. But the crafty Jayewardene

Rajiv's murder

knew when to bow his head. This, Jayewardene did, and New Delhi was happy. Negotiations were on and soon came the Indo-Lanka accord. It had its shortcomings but could have been improved if allowed to work. This was not to be.

Won admiration

Rajiv won the world's admiration and
(Continued on page 11)



Rajiv Memorial

them. I also subscribe to these sentiments now.

Rajiv was the great grandson of Motihlal Nehru. The grandson of Jawaharlal. Son of Indira and Feroze Gandhi. He belonged to what was modern India's greatest political dynasty. Yet he was reluctant to enter politics. It was the plane accident that killed his brother Sanjay which made Rajiv enter politics. Otherwise he would have been quite content to be flying planes. His mother's assassination

and is doing gloriously well. The dynasty too flourishes. His widow Sonia is the power that rules India. His dashing son Rahul is an MP. His vivacious daughter Priyanka reminding many of grandma Indira will be a political force to be reckoned with in the future. Even his sister-in-law Meneka and nephew Varun are in politics though at the other end of the political spectrum.

After Rajiv Gandhi became premier he brought about two praiseworthy

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Another July passing by....

(Continued from page 9)

security forces are geared up to face threats to the nation because the Tigers want to take revenge for Black July. The whole security apparatus is placed on a red alert it is said. Any relatively minor incident of violence by the LTTE is attributed to the Black July syndrome. After July passes a collective sigh of relief is released. With the spectre of Black July behind it the nation strides boldly and confidently forward until of course the next evil "black July". Each year sees this comical ritual being enacted faithfully.

This annual "black July" scare helps annually to deflect focus away from the remembering of the Black July 1983 pogrom against Tamils. Instead of letting the Nation recall this terrible act with remorse the spotlight on an imaginary threat from the LTTE helps reverse roles. The nation at large is perceived as the "victims" because they are considered vulnerable to a diabolical LTTE threat because of "black July". The significance of Black July is distorted. Instead of being portrayed as the month denoting the pogrom against the Tamils "Black July" is now the month where the nation particularly the Sinhala majority is rendered cruelly vulnerable to LTTE violence.

One cannot deny that several acts of violence are committed by the LTTE every year. This is true of the armed forces too. In a war situation acts of violence are inevitable. But the hoax perpetrated upon the gullible masses is the fiction that the LTTE singles out the month of July deliberately to commit great atrocities to wreak vengeance for Black July. The track record of the LTTE does not bear this out.

The Tigers plan and execute their operations on the basis of politico-military necessity and not on the basis of melodramatic sentiment. If and when they conduct major operations during July as in 1993 in Weli Oya or 1996 in Mullaitheevu those were done on the basis of militaristic calculations. It was only a coincidence that these were done in July. Of course when such developments occur the LTTE news releases refer to the regular Preparations by the Security establishment as a reaction of July 83. By doing so the Tigers draw amused attention to the antics of the authorities while making Tamils remember. Black July strikes a responsive chord in many a Tamil heart as a very large number of Tamils have suffered directly or indirectly in that month.

Several media organisations trot out a list of all the happenings in July over the years to justify the paranoia of an LTTE attack during Black July. There is no denying that the July list is impressive indeed. But if all the incidents that have occurred since 1983 are classified according to month one would find that each and every month possesses a large volume. If that is the criteria for calling July "Black" then all the months in the calendar have to be described as "Black". Another point is that if the security forces are really on full alert during "Black" July then the

chances of the LTTE embarking upon a major operation become quite slim. So there is every possibility that the scale of LTTE operations during July may decrease over the years. This does not mean that the LTTE will not undertake any operation during July. They may even launch one in this last week of July if necessary. The point however is that it would not be to drive home the Black July notion but more on the basis of military calculations. If that happens LTTE propagandists may very well add a "Black July" spin to it. After all it must be quite amusing for the Tigers to witness this annual fetish for Black July.

The negative result of this campaign is the undermining and distortion of the significance of July 1983. Signs of blaming the victim syndrome are also visible. The inherent danger in the pogrom of July 1983 being forgotten is that it may very well happen again. As the truism goes "those who do not remember the lessons of history are condemned to relive it again". A major demographic change of vast political significance is the phenomenon of about 500,000 Tamil relocating to the areas outside the North and East in recent times. Politically this is a major obstacle to the Tamil separatist cause. Here are people electing to live in "enemy" areas even as a bitter armed struggle is being launched in the North and East on the rationale that coexistence is not possible.

But this point is lost on the new spectre that is emerging in the South. The ugly head of neo fascism masquerading as patriotism is being raised. The Tamil people in particular and the minorities in general are being pilloried as "aliens". The purveyors of racial hatred are spreading their evil gospel and irresponsible sections of the media are peddling it regularly. Communalism propaganda in the garb of pseudo nationalism is gaining ground. There are many references to the "tolerance and greatness of the Sinhala people in not enacting another July 1983" in this hate discourse. The "norm" is being distorted as the "exception". These are not sign that augur well for the future. The minorities are feeling increasingly insecure.

After the Holocaust of the Hitlerian era and its impact on the European Collective psyche few would have expected fascism or neo Nazism to resurface. Yet many European Nations including Germany are experiencing it now. All people of this land striving for a decent and humane future would hope that the July 1983 pogrom was only an aberration. But as in the case of eternal vigilance being a prerequisite for maintaining perennial liberty, constant rekindling of the tragic memories of "Black July 1983" is very necessary to prevent repetition. [transCurrents.com]

["Another July Passing By", first published in The Sunday Leader, on July 23, 2000]

(Continued from page 10)

respect when he went to Colombo to sign the accord. The Tamils on the whole were happy then. I remember writing a piece "Why Tamil eyes are smiling" for The Island then. Rajiv had a nasty experience when a naval rating took a swipe at him with his rifle during the guard of honour. Rajiv saw it from the corner of his eye and deftly sidestepped taking the blow on his shoulder instead of head.

When Rajiv returned to India President Venkatraman defied convention and came to the airport to receive him. "The hazards of waging peace" said Venkatraman, aptly describing the situation. If that blow was fatal history Indo-Lanka history may have been different. Then came the war with the LTTE. A confident Rajiv said "It will be a short, swift strike. Our boys will be back home soon."

How wrong he was. The IPKF - LTTE war dragged on. Tamil civilians suffered and many harboured deep antipathy towards India. Finally India was outsmarted when the LTTE aligned with Premadasa to drive the third party out.

Then Rajiv himself lost elections. The Bofors scandal had raised its head. Had Rajiv lived longer this issue itself may have been detrimental to his image. But that was not to be. The explosion at Sriperumbudoor changed all that and the course of history.

Fifteen years have passed since Rajiv Gandhi's death. Is not the time opportune now for the "Eelam" Tamils to express their regrets publicly? I am informed by knowledgeable Indian circles that one thing troubling Sonia and the children is the fact that there

has been no apology made so far publicly. Private expressions yes, but no public or collective expression. What hurts the family is the fact that Rajiv really wanted to do good for the Tamils.

Collective guilt

When the 1983 July violence happened the Anglican Bishop of Kurunegala, Rt. Rev. Lakshman Wickremasinghe wrote a letter publicly apologising to the Tamils. The ailing Bishop was not in the country at the time and certainly had no hand in the violence. Yet he spoke of collective guilt and stated his views openly. I speak from experience in saying that Bishop Lakshman's act helped soothe to a great extent the pain and sorrow felt by many Tamils then.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa is another example where years of animosity are overwhelmed when frank admissions of guilt and genuine expressions of remorse are stated. Rajiv Gandhi may have been killed by the LTTE and except for a few the Tamil people have had no hand in that, but a collective expression of genuine regret could certainly help change the current status quo.

Let us remember Rajiv on the 15th anniversary of his death for the good intentions and actions taken in pursuance of those. Let us remember him as the man who wanted to usher in a fair deal for Sri Lankans in general and Tamils in particular. Let us commemorate his anniversary with the admission that the accord he signed in 1987 remains still the best possible settlement to the Tamil national question ever made so far. [The Sunday Leader & www.transcurrents.com]

(Continued from page 19)

How Maths Can be

experiences and teach the subject differently using multi-media and interactivity.

One school asked HeyMath if they could find a "nice way" to introduce algebra to students.

So the company came up with a 30-minute game which children play on the computer, asking questions.

Vexing

At Chennai's Padma Seshadri School, HeyMath taught students vexing geometry problems like why, say, vertically opposite angles are equal through a real life, contextual experience taken from a local railway station.

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arches have quadratic curves.

Maths teacher Durga Chandrashekhar says teaching the subject has become easier with HeyMath.

"We used the blackboard a lot in our teaching. But HeyMath lessons often come in 3-D animation, so it's easier to teach and fun to learn. Students also begin questioning a lot," she says.

"HeyMath improved my practice. The visual impact is quite amazing. It helps mostly in geometry. When you see things happening in front of you on a screen, you understand them better. Maths just springs to life".

With seven million internet subscribers and nearly 50 million web users, India still has a long way to go to equip its schools and the majority of its students with useful online tools like HeyMath.

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Tamil-Brahmi inscription on pottery found in Thailand

The presence of the characteristic letter Ra confirms that the language is Tamil

A unique Tamil-Brahmi Inscription on pottery of the second century AD has recently been excavated in Thailand.

A Thai-French team of archaeologists, led by Dr. Bérénice Bellina of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France, and Praon Silpanth, Lecturer, Silpakorn University, Thailand, has discovered a sherd of inscribed pottery during their current excavations at Phu Khao Thong in Thailand.

At the request of the archaeologists, Iravatham Mahadevan, an expert in Tamil Epigraphy, has examined the inscription. He has confirmed that the pottery inscription is in Tamil and written in Tamil-Brahmi characters of about the second century AD. Only three letters have survived on the pottery fragment. They read tu Ra o... , possibly part of the Tamil word turavon meaning 'monk.'

The presence of the characteristic letter Ra confirms that the language is Tamil and the script is Tamil-Brahmi. It is possible that the inscription recorded the name of a Buddhist monk who travelled to Thailand from Tamil Nadu. This is the earliest Tamil inscription found so far in South East Asia and attests to the maritime contacts of the Tamils with the Far East even in the early centuries AD.

Prof. Richard Salomon of the University of Washington, U.S., an expert in Indian Epigraphy, has made the following comment on the inscription:

"I am happy to hear that the inscription in question is in fact Tamil-Brahmi, as I had suspected. This is important, among other reasons, because it presents a

parallel with the situation with Indian inscriptions in Egypt and the Red Sea area. There we find both Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions and standard-Brahmi inscriptions; and we now see the same in Vietnam and South-East Asia. This indicates that the overseas trade between India to both the West and the East involved people from the Tamil country and also other regions."

Iravatham Mahadevan adds: "Already we know of the existence of a touchstone engraved in Tamil in the Tamil-Brahmi script of about the third or fourth century AD found in Thailand and presently kept in a museum in the ancient port city of Khuan Luk Pat in Southern Thailand. There is every hope that the ongoing excavations of the Thai-French team will bring up more evidence of ancient contacts between India and Thailand." [hinduonnet]



IMPORTANT FIND: Pottery inscription in Tamil-Brahmi found in Thailand by a Thai-French team of archaeologists.

Photo: Courtesy, Dr. Berenice Bellina of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France

Gearing up for success



Scene from Shankar's next venture *Veyyil*

With the verdict deeming Imsai Arasan 23am Pulikesi, a stupendous hit all over the State, Shankar is geared up to churn out a hat-trick of hits as a producer. His next venture *Veyyil* is directed by his one-time associate Vasantha Balan.

Getting better and better with each release, Bharath plays the hero while Pasupathy's character is etched on similar lines, getting an extended footage.

The *Majaa* impact evidently has done wonders to Pasupathy's change of stance.

Bhavana, on a roll after *Chitiram Pesudathi* is paired with Bharath.

Strong indications of SS Music fame Shriya Reddy walking away with all honours is already doing the rounds. As a slum girl, hers is a totally deglamourised role clad in torn costumes.

Vadivelu has audience in splits (Imsai Arasan 23am Pulikesi)

By M Bharat Kumar



Making a historic film is no easy proposition. Producers shudder to think of the cost in erecting sets alone not to speak of the production. You have to doff the hat to Shankar, coming with a period film not shorn of grandeur, substance and quality. His faith in debutant director Simbu Devan is sure to win him amazing returns.

Unlike the films of such genre, *Imsai Arasan...* is witty, pacy and hilarious right down the wire. The entire movie revolves around a small kingdom with enough satire on the politics prevalent then. The interesting aspect is in Simbu lacing the present day happenings in politics, sports and relevant areas in a hilarious manner.

Casting Vadivelu as the hero, the cartoonist-turned-director had a readymade winner at hand. In the main lead for the first time, Vadivelu has the audience in a trance, variety being the key to unlock the humour doors. The dual roles of a nitwit king and a revolutionary sit lightly on those well-endowed shoulders.

The story line is very simple. In brief, it may well pass off as a repeat of the formula MGR films. Twins get separated at birth due to the avaricious ways of a greedy minister with his eyes on the Kingdom. One child grows up as an ignorant King Pulikesi (Vadivelu). The other one turns out to be a Ukiraputhan

(revolutionary and patriot). He does a fine imitation of the Vathiyar in his earlier years, singing, fighting for a cause and dancing to his heart's content.

Once Ukiraputhan resolve to bring things in order, it's fun and frolic at its delightful best. In home at the varied roles, Vadivelu has feasted on the God-sent opportunity. His act on the Cola war (brand endorsement by celebrities) is the sort to bring the roof down.

Vadivelu not just excels in comedy, but as Ukiraputhan he replicates MGR of the '50s, singing, dancing and fighting for a cause.

Equally impressive is Nasser as the treacherous Minister. A huge star cast including Illavarasu, Srimaan, Manorama, Tejashree, Manobala and Monicka play their part to the letter.

While Krishnamoorthy's art work needs mentioning, mind-boggling are the huge sets and costumes designed for the characters. The tunes of Sabesh-Murali take you to the days of the yore (period films).

Shankar and Simbhu Devan have combined to give a different meaning to Tamil films. If it sends the right signals across, the intention would be well served.

Comedy buffs could well lap up the offering - sincere efforts ought to be acknowledged. [Newstodaynet]

Bharath has a special bond with Shankar, getting the first feel of the director's magic in *Boys*. In Shankar's maiden home production *Kadhal*, Bharath's emerging talent was exploited to the hilt by director Balaji Sakthivel.

The soft-spoken Bharath owes his gratitude to Shankar. '*Kadhal*' was an unforgettable experience. It helped me to stay afloat in the industry and in course of time meaningful offers started coming. Looking forward to a hat-trick of success.'

Veyyil, quite typical to the objective of S Pictures, will have an innovative storyline and script. Says director Vasantha Balan, 'Quite appropriate to the title, we wanted to shoot the movie in a place with blazing sun right through the year. We settled for Virudhunagar after a bout of home work. The town came alive again during the shoot as a spate of theatres had closed shop paving the way for houses and

shops to emerge.'

Music has been the high point of Shankar's films. This time too it will be no different, averred Balan. 'The tunes of G V Prakash (A R Rahman's nephew) should create the same impact like his numbers Chikku Bukku Rayilae, Shock Adikuthu Sona, Azhagana Ratchasiyae and *Kadhal Yanai Varugiradhu Remo*.'

Ever the one to like his film do all the talking, Shankar said 'particular that each film should be different from the other, with no compromise on quality. You get a satisfaction entrusting the job to emerging talents, which the industry is never short of. Saw the spark in Balan when he did a film for Kavithalaya banners (*Album*). Getting the audience encouragement is the big motivating factor.

They are receptive to new ideas which I got to experience in *Kadhal*. One thing has led to another and hoping to continue the good work.' [Newstodaynet]

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7,000 Tamil Pilgrims gathered at Midland Shrine

On July 15th, 2006 Saturday, Tamil pilgrims made their pilgrimage to Midland Martyrs' Shrine. The Shrine honours the eight Jesuit saints who lived, worked and died here over 350 years ago. The grounds, including the famous Shrine Church and 75 pleasantly landscaped acres invite us into prayer and tranquility.

The Administration at the Shrine reserves the Third Saturday in July every year for Tamils pilgrims to come and pray and spend the day at the shrine. Tamils have been making this pilgrimage for the last twenty years and number has been increased to 7000 this year. Holy mass was celebrated in the open Air alter in Tamil, celebrating with 9 priests who came from India and Sri Lanka along with the priests in Toronto. Rev. Dr. Jochimpillai who is the spiritual Director of the Tamil Catholic Community of Toronto was the main celebrant. Rev. Fr. Paul Raj preached at the Holy Mass. After thanksgiving, Mrs Mathura Thambinayagam, the President of the Tamil Catholic Community of Toronto thanked the Sub-Committee Chairperson Anton Philip, Secretary Christine Seevaratnam, Coordinator Jude Aloysius, Treasurer Stanly Velichore, Volunteer coordinator Christian Emmanuel, One of the Chief Organizers Angelo Swampillai for carrying out festival in an excellent manner. She also thanked the volunteers who worked tirelessly, the Our Lady of Good Health Parish Choir for the excellent and prayerful songs and media who made their contribution in giving the publicity for the festival. Lunch was followed by the mass. Food was distributed by the pilgrims who had made their vows to the Saints and families also brought their own food and shared their meals. At 3.30 p.m. Benediction with Adoration officiated by Rev. Fr. Emil Paul who is visiting from Jaffna Diocese.

Photos and History



Catholic Priests distributing Communion



Choir of the Lady of Good Health Parish



Catholic Priests distributing Communion



During the Benediction in the Church



Catholic Priests distributing Communion

Below: History About the Midland Martyr's Shrine



The history of the present Shrine can be traced back to the efforts of Jesuits who returned to Canada in the 1840's. In November 1844, Father Pierre Chazelle SJ wrote to his Superior on how he celebrated Mass at the ruins of Ste. Marie I earlier that year in June and suggests that excavations should commence. He and his predecessors were also determined to find the destroyed village of St. Ignace II: the place where Saints Brebeuf and Lalemant were martyred.

Fr. Felix Martin SJ visited Ste. Marie I and Ste. Marie II in August 1855, and surveyed their ruins found on the Wye River and Christian Island respectively. Bishops in Canada and the United States began formally petitioning Rome for the canonization of the eight Jesuit martyrs as early as 1884.

In 1886, a memorial church to the

Martyrs was dedicated in Penetanguishene, now known as St. Anne's Church.

In 1902 Fr. Arthur E. Jones SJ from Montreal travelled to Huronia, mapped the archaeological sites dug up by local farmers, and identified them with the mission villages described in the Jesuit Relations two hundred and fifty years earlier. It was Fr. Jones who first identified the location of St. Ignace II on top of a hill on Gervais Road outside of Wabaushehene.

In 1906 the Jesuit Provincial was offered the parish of St. John the Evangelist in Wabaushehene by the Bishop of Toronto.

In 1907 Fr. J. B. Nolin SJ built a chapel and a hostel on the site where Fr. Arthur E. Jones believed that Frs. Brebeuf and Lalemant were martyred, the village of St. Ignace II. On the Feast of the Assumption, the first pilgrimage to Martyrs Hill took place. There were over 2500 people at the ceremony and the numbers began to grow over the years. People from as far away Montreal, Ottawa, and Winnipeg made their way to the Martyrs' Hill Shrine.

The year 1925 was truly a special one. The martyrs were beatified in Rome. The Superior of the Jesuits in Upper Canada, Fr. John M. Fillion SJ, organized a pilgrimage to the ruins of Ste. Marie I on this special occasion.

On June 21, 1925, an estimated 10,000 people (some sources say 6000) attended the outdoor Mass at Ste. Marie I, offered by Archbishop Neil McNeil of Toronto. A memorial plaque was unveiled. The Jesuits hoped that one day, the property of Ste. Marie I would some day be in their possession.

In 1918, on his deathbed, Fr. Jones told Fr. Fillion that he had his doubts whether the shrine built in Wabaushehene was on the site of Brebeuf's and Lalemant's martyrdom. A local man, Mr. Alphonse Arpin was convinced he found the true site of St. Ignace II. He told others how the site fit the geographical descriptions found in the Jesuit Relations of centuries past and how he had received signs from Heaven indicating that he had located this hallowed place. These included balls of fire coming forth from the ground (also seen by Fr. Bouvrette and a local woman, Mrs. A. Picotte) and a buried holy card of St. Terese of Liseux tainted with red stains from the ground. Arpin was able to see the old abandoned Huron trails making there way through the woods and along with a Mr. Thomas G. Connon painstakingly measured the distances between archaeological sites. Thus the location of St. Ignace II was determined accurately by these men through the historical infor

mation provided in the Jesuit Relations. Soon, the archaeologists would come to examine the site.

It was decided in 1925 that the shrine at Martyrs' Hill should be dismantled. The old shrine was too far from the railway line, the water supply for the pilgrims was inadequate, and its historical authenticity questionable. Since there was no question about the authenticity of the ruins of Ste. Marie I,

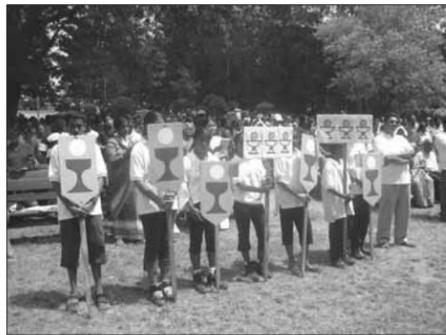
(Continued on page 18)



Holy Mass Celebrated in Openair Altar



Section of the Pilgrims



Volunteers are getting ready to distribute Communion



Volunteers are getting ready to distribute Communion

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Fulfilling the poll promise of the DMK and the wish of the Tamil film industry, the statue erected on Kamaraj Salai was inaugurated at a function coinciding with the actor's fifth death anniversary, on July 21st.

Speaking at the function, Chief Minister Karunanidhi struck a personal note and recalled his long friendship with the Dadasaheb Phalke awardee that dates back to the 1950s.

'Our leaders and ideology were different. We had several political differences and testing occasions that challenged our friendship. But, our friendship stood the test of times and politics', he observed.

This article is being published in commemoration of the 5th Death Anniversary of Sivaji Ganesan:

Standing tall, shining still

By T.R. Jawahar



That Sivaji Ganesan's statue has become sub-judice should be of little concern for his admirers. The actor non pareil stands tall in the hearts of the people.

Born into a poor family, Ganesan took flight from home at the tender age of seven to meet his tryst with destiny, on the stage and screen. The spark was evident from his early days. In fact, he defied all logic and rules of artistic evolution. Sivaji Ganesan was a consummate actor from day one!

'With my first movie itself, I landed on the moon', he once told this writer. In fact he said, 'moo...o oon' in his typical booming baritone with that all too familiar drag that was vintage Sivaji. For a prolific performer of his calibre he was too humble and ever remained an ardent student of his vocation, even after he had written and re-written the grammar of acting several times over. 'What do I know? I only did what my

'Sivaji' stands tall on Marina

directors bid me to do. All credit goes to them'.

He was certainly not acting when he said this, but the remarkable understatement reflected the character and disposition of the man to life and to his career. 'I can never become a director. I can only act and this I can and I want to do till my last breath. I am not so talented as these youngsters who could write, act, sing, dance and direct'.

I still remember those bulging, probing eyes rolling in mock seriousness when he made the statement. Sivaji never wavered from his karmic duty as an actor. He was never even tempted into lofty rhetoric when lesser beings in the industry used to harangue endlessly on the pros and cons of acting. But then Sivaji did not have to speak. His portrayals spoke a million words, wrote a thousand theories on the art and science of acting and has spawned generations of actors, all trying to imitate and emulate him.

The sheer volume of his output is astounding and the versatility and vitality of his performances confound all. The breath-taking array of his roles makes one wonder if it was really just one man who did all this. He could switch from extreme roles in a jiffy. The regal gait of a monarch and the clumsy walk of a village idiot, the cunning viles of a villain or the utopian goodness of a hero, a doting father or a wayward son, a sanguine saint or a senseless maniac, as Lord Shiva or His devotee, from a short-tempered musician to a soft-spoken family man, you name it, and a visage of Sivaji would pop up your mind's screen. He was the undisputed master of melodrama and little wonder that the people of Tamilnadu, have laughed and wept with him for over five decades and will do so for time immemorial by watching his immortal performances.

Sivaji Ganesan was an ageless wonder. If the current generation were to study his career they would emerge completely confused about the chronology of his movies. Would anyone believe if I say that he did Navarathiri, Karnan and Puthiya Paravai in the same year? Or for that matter Thillana Mohanambal and Ooty Varai

Uravu? Or again Thiruvartuchelvar and Iru Malargal? And to think that he was just thirty one when he played Kattabomman, the macho Tamil chieftain who dared the British or as the venerable V.O.C just a year later! For him acting was a series of different states of mind and the moment his mood shifted to the latest role on hand, the inner spirit automatically generated the relevant body language and expressions on the exterior. Here was a man whose every cell, every drop of blood, every sinew and muscle could act, thus creating a colossal facade that was much, much more than the sum of all its parts.

Such was the range of his histrionic abilities that he dwarfed all his peers and strode the tinsel world like a towering titan. Bestowed with an imposing demeanour, a powerful screen presence, a resonating voice that could also melt into a cool stream and vibrant eyes housed in a remarkable face, Sivaji was a make-up man's delight and a director's dream.

Sivaji was often accused of over emoting, but then with his bottomless ocean of skill, he could carry on till eternity unless the director bothered to say 'cut'. And few directors had the heart to stop the deluge and often left it to his fans to consume to their fill. In a way such directors did him a disservice, but Sivaji had also proved that he was capable of 'restraining' himself if the director wanted it that way and movies like Sridhar's Nenjirukkum Varai, Balachander's Yethiroli and Savale Samali stand testimony to this facet of the actor. Sivaji was a gold mine of talent. He could be presented as raw gold, cut to size, polished to taste, made into any kind of jewellery or molded into any shape. It was wholly upto the director to take his pick. But he was gold all the same, pure and pristine.

Sivaji was a national treasure but was also sadly a victim of regional bias. In a milieu dominated by Hindi film intellectuals who moulded filmi opinion at the national level, Sivaji was deliberately overlooked, though international recognition came his way unsolicited. For them Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor were pan Indian icons but



Sivaji never figured in their scheme of things just because he hailed from a regional film domain and spoke a local tongue. And paradoxically for him, in Tamilnadu he suffered because of the reverse effect. While he threw his lot with a national party, he was promptly sidelined owing to the dominance of Dravidian politicians of the sixties, who had appointed themselves as the sole custodians of Tamil. Could there ever be a greater protagonist of Tamil than Sivaji Ganesan or has anyone else enriched and elevated the language as he did, beyond parochial walls and transcending State borders? Though Sivaji Ganesan brought glory and world attention to the State and his mother tongue, it is also a fact that he was badly let down here. An artiste of international stature was confined to totally local terrain.

All said, Sivaji Ganesan would ever remain the mascot for acting, for admirers and critics alike. [newstodaynet.com]



Surya-Jyothika-Bhumika Chawla starrer, *Jilendru Oru Kathal* will have scenes from Canada.

Jilendru Oru Kathal starring Surya-Jyothika-Bhumika

Following the success of Ghajini, Surya is the most happening actor in Tamil, on par with Vijay and Vikram. Naturally, this home production by his cousin Gjanavel has generated a lot of interest and curiosity in the industry.

Jilendru Oru Kathal, is directed by Krishna who was an associate of Gowtham Menon in *Minnale*. Another interesting feature is its music, composed by none other than A R Rahman.

Surya's role is entirely different from those he had portrayed in his films so far...

Surya has broken into the category of top five heroes, post-Ghajini, while

Jyotika's role in Chandramukhi is something every actress dreams of...

Sources say the unit of Suriya, Jyothika and Bhumika will shoot two songs in some never-seen-before locations in the country side of Canada for *Jilendru Oru Kathal*.

Suriya also contributes to many charitable causes, such as becoming a Goodwill Ambassador for Tamil Nadu Kidney Research Foundation. Suriya has promised to do all he can for



patients to have access to affordable haemodialysis.

News reports say that, Suriya's role in promoting health awareness has grown after his encouraging experience with a short film that he did for the organisation REACH, on Tuberculosis.

Gnane's Digital Touch

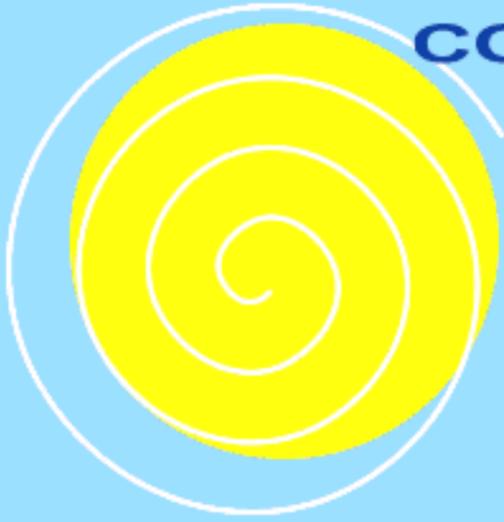
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(HWYS 10 & 5)

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DIXIE & HWY 7 (BRAMALEA CITY
CENTRE)

Green Cup

40 mL DCSL Very
Special Old Arrack
30 mL passion juice
75 mL fresh grape
juice
25 mL Nellie Syrup
Glass- Champagne
glass
Method: Shake

Original Smash

50 mL DCSL Old Arrack
or Very Special
Old Arrack
-Crushed ice
-25mL Gingerale
-Garnish- cut lime
Method- just mix

See page 26 for Other Locations

Cheers to good times!

Tamil "Top Doctor wins two awards"

Dr. Rayar is a well-known and distinguished Medical Professional from the Tamil community was recently featured in an article in the Toronto Star

**by Staff Reporter
Nasreen Gulamhusein.**

Dr. Umesh Rayar - was awarded with the most outstanding professional award for the year 2006 by the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce last Spring.

He was also awarded the 2006 Distinguished Community Paediatrician Award by the Canadian Paediatric Society.

The newspaper quotes that "He does absolute magic" with kids.

Here is the article from Toronto Star, "Top Top doctor finds work fun":

If Umesh Rayar has learned anything in 20 years of being a pediatrician, it's to always listen to mom.

"I never take what a mother says lightly," he said. "She knows more about her child than I do and if she tells me something is wrong, it probably is."

The cheery yellow walls in his cozy Brampton medical office make a visit to the doctor a little easier to stomach. Toys are strewn about to keep waiting children entertained.

"He does absolute magic with these kids," says Rayar's secretary, Joan Costello.

"I see the kids coming in here and they are so scared of the doctor. By the time they leave, they are laughing and

smiling."

Costello's 17-year-old son Jeffrey has been under the doctor's care for about seven years. He was diagnosed with a mild form of autism called Asperger's Syndrome.

"I see a big difference in my son socially since he's been with Dr. Rayar. He's turned around 100 per cent."

Rayar is booked solid almost every day but insists: "It doesn't feel like work. Kids are too fun. But it can get hard, especially in the start when I was on call. I would get called six or seven times a night. Good thing my wife is understanding."

It's hard for her not to be, since she's also a doctor.

In June, Rayar was awarded the 2006 Distinguished Community Paediatrician Award by the Canadian Paediatric Society.

This year he also won the Most Outstanding Professional Award from the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce.

In 1981, after completing medical school in Sri Lanka, a scholarship at the Hospital for Sick Children led him to Canada.

Twenty-five years later, he's making more of a contribution to his community than most.

He is the vice-president of the Canadian Medical Dental Development Association — a volunteer group of health care professionals that helps disaster victims all over the world.

He admits the temptation to treat his three children when they were younger was strong.

"My wife's the boss, she took care of them well. If they had something minor I would have a look."

He looks deadpan. "If it was more serious I would tell her, "Please consult your family doctor."

Oil money fuels combatants

The battle between Israel and Hezbollah is pushing the price of oil even higher. That's more disposable income for Middle East oil sellers.

There's a phrase people in the know like to toss around. In part to prove they're in the know. And in part because they don't really know what else to say. Scare premium is what I'm talking about. And best guesses are we've got about all the scare premium we can take in the oil markets right about now.

Lebanon-based Hezbollah makes no secret of its main financier: Iran.

"It's generally accepted that Hezbollah receives approximately \$100 million a year from the government in Tehran, which constitutes the bulk of the funding for Hezbollah's operations. Iran also supplies Hezbollah's long-range missiles, the kind that hit the Israeli city of Haifa. Now, Tehran's already in the UN hot seat over its nuclear program. So why ask for more trouble?, asks Martin Indyk, a former US ambassador to Israel.

Patrick Clawson of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy says Iranian leaders aren't scared. They feel their oil-rich economy is sanction-proof. "Iran's got more than \$45 billion in foreign-exchange reserves in the bank. Iran thinks that its oil is vital to the world economy, and the West can't cut it off. And so Iran is remarkably self confident.

It's also expanding its influence in the region. Pro-Iran groups play key roles in Iraq's new government. And Tehran not only has financial leverage over Hezbollah, which is Shia, But also the Sunni Hamas, which is fighting Israel on its southern flank," says Patrick Clawson.

As the financing of Hamas was cut off, partly by the results of the US treasury, Hamas became more and more dependent on Iran. Take these regional partnerships, add in high dollars for a barrel of oil, and Ambassador Indyk says OPEC's number-two producer feels the wind is in its sails. [marketplace.org]

Helping Hands Senior Care celebrates 1st. Anniversary on Saturday, July 22, 2006

"Villa Karuna" the senior home run by Helping Hands completed its first year of home care recently. Helping Hands is the brain-child of Indrani Nagenthiram who was touched by the hardships and difficulties faced by Seniors in the Tamil community and embarked on this project to help the needy Tamil elders. The organization helps the Sri Lankan seniors, with companionship, love, and most of all well-attended home care. "We thrive to make people happy" says Indrani Nagenthiram, the owner of Helping Hands. "This is a small tribute to my clients, and their families as well as my hard working staff."

With an attendance of over fifty people Helping Hands at Villa Karuna has

brought tranquility and a sense of security to the aged. The inmates experienced singing, dancing and even a little drama in celebrating their one year of stay at Villa Karuna.. It was a special occasion for everyone as they enjoyed the great meals, and the company of everyone. . Plaques and certificates were given to the staff and everyone who helped the business to grow in one way or other. The evening ended with a smile on every one's face.

Life is something to be cherished and one can say that there isn't enough time to save it all. This may be true but seeing the elders share a laugh, or show an emotion of kindness to their caretakers and friends, you come to realize that this is a place built on love and compassion.



Jim Coccimiglio, Senior Vice President-TD Bank, A Corporate Sponsor of the Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce and also the sponsor of this Award, Dr. Umesh Rayar, Hon. Gerard Kennedy, Former Minister of Education, the Chief Guest at the Awards Gala held on April 1st, 2006, Logan Velumailum, President, Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce.

(Photo: Gnane)



Picture taken during Shrimathi Padmini's Visit to "Villa Karuna" Senior's Home , Toronto, Canada on April 14, 2006

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On the Rhodes to Success

Recent engineering grad wins prestigious scholarship to study at University of Oxford

BY LORI BONA HUNT

Arani Kajenthira thought she was dreaming when she got the call telling her she had won a prestigious Rhodes Scholarship.

"Seriously, I was half asleep when the phone rang, so I wasn't sure if it was real or not," says Kajenthira, three days after learning she would be on her way to the University of Oxford. "It took until yesterday for it to seem real to me."

She is one of two students from Ontario — and 11 nationwide — to receive a Rhodes Scholarship. The award, which covers tuition, other fees and a living allowance, is worth about \$35,000 US a year.

"I've always wanted to go to Oxford," she says. "It's been a dream of mine since high school. I just didn't think it would ever be financially feasible."

Kajenthira, a 2005 engineering graduate, was one of 12 Ontario students selected from applications to be interviewed for two Rhodes Scholarships. She travelled to Toronto on the weekend of Nov. 26 for her 5:20 p.m. interview, then spent an anxious evening waiting for the phone to ring.

"They warned us it would be late. So I went out to dinner with my parents, but we all kept looking over at the cellphone, waiting for it to ring. Later, I got tired of waiting and was falling asleep when the call came in at about 10:45 p.m."

It was a long time in coming.

Kajenthira had hoped to attend Oxford immediately after graduating last spring because she'd been invited to be one of Guelph's two nominees for a Rhodes Scholarship in fall 2004.

"I had found an amazing program that was in line with what I want to do," she says. Unfortunately, she wasn't selected for an interview.

"I went ahead and applied to Oxford anyway and ended up getting into the



Arani Kajenthira will head off to England to do graduate work next fall.

Photo by Martin Schwalbe

college I wanted. But I turned it down because it just didn't make any sense financially, and I had found a job."

Kajenthira is currently a staff scientist with GeoSyntec Consultants, performing environmental field sampling, data analysis and engineering and earth science calculations.

"I decided to think about it and maybe apply again later," she says. "So when I was asked to put in an application this year, I figured: 'Why not?'"

Kajenthira will head for England next fall. She hopes her graduate work will lead to her developing cost-effective remediation technology to remove contaminants from soil and groundwater in Third World countries.

She became interested in the subject while conducting a research project as a U of G student with Engineers Without Borders.

"I was working on introducing a clean water supply to a rural community in

Tanzania," she said. "It really opened my eyes."

Her long-term career goal is to forge a link between industry and non-governmental organizations.

"I'd like to connect the experience of people in industry with the passion and contacts that NGOs have. A lot of NGOs rely on young people, university students who may be very dedicated but don't have as much practical experience because they're in school or just out of school. People in industry have a lot of experience but may not have time to go overseas. We need to bring the two groups together to create a greater impact."

While a U of G student, Kajenthira won prestigious Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council awards in 2004 and 2005 that allowed her to work in research laboratories in the Department of Plant Agriculture. There she collaborated with scientists from the California Institute of Technology to study the behaviour of *E. coli* bacteria. She also expanded on research she began in 2002 on the role of hormones in wound-induced stem cell

regeneration. In 2003, she worked at Mount Sinai Hospital as a Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute summer intern, conducting research on the effect of antibiotics on the development of osteoarthritis.

The recipient of a U of G entrance scholarship and an Ontario Aiming for the Top Tuition Scholarship, Kajenthira was on the dean's list her entire career at Guelph. She was an active member of Women in Science and Engineering, Engineers Without Borders, the National Agriculture and Biotechnology Council, and Professional Engineers of Ontario. She also served as an academic cluster leader, mentoring a group of 20 first-year engineering students, and volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, the YWCA, Relay for Life, the Dunary Dufferin- Wellington Homes for Psychiatric Rehabilitation and the Onward Willow Centre.

Students from about 20 countries compete annually for 90 Rhodes Scholarships. Created in 1902 and named for Cecil Rhodes, the scholarships recognize "high academic achievement, integrity of character, a spirit of unselfishness, respect for others, potential leadership and physical vigour."

President Alastair Summerlee says he's "delighted for Arani. This will make her dream of studying at Oxford a reality. She will be an excellent ambassador for the Rhodes Scholarship program, the University of Guelph and Canada. The Rhodes Scholarship committee has recognized and rewarded the talents of a remarkable young person."

Past Rhodes Scholarship recipients have included country presidents, Supreme Court justices, poets, writers, scholars, politicians, Olympic athletes and Nobel Peace Prize winners. Among them are former Canadian governor general Roland Michener; astronomer Edwin Hubble; former U.S. president Bill Clinton; feminist social critic Naomi Wolf; Canadian commentator Rex Murphy; and former Ontario premier Bob Rae.

- Courtesy: University of Guelph, Ontario

"Without rain nothing can be done in the world

Mari allathu kariyam illai - Avvaiyar



Corn Field, Habarana, Sri Lanka

Lovely! See the cloud, the cloud appear!
Lovely! See the rain, the rain drew near!
Who spoke?
It was the little corn ear
High on the tip of the stalk. - Zuni Indian corn-grinding song

[Humanityashore.org]

What he Said



At play in welfare camp for recently displaced from Allaipiddy. Children from Allaipiddy do not attend school due to displacement.

What He Said

What could my mother be to yours ? What kin is my father to yours anyway ? And how did you and I meet ever ? But in love. Our hearts have mingled like red earth and pouring rain - Chempulapeyarinar ["poet of red earth and pouring rain"]

Kurunthokai 40

[Picture by Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai]

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George Hart awarded "Iyal Viruthu" in Toronto

By D.B.S. Jeyaraj



Professor George L. Hart

Conferring awards and titles on each other has become a common feature in the life of Thamizh Canadians in recent times. Some individuals and institutions have made this practice a virtual cottage industry. There are however some notable exceptions to this general rule.

It was my privilege and pleasure to participate in such a ceremony last week (June 24th) in Toronto. Professor George .L. Hart, chair of Tamil Studies at California University, Berkeley was presented the "Iyal Viruthu" lifetime achievement award by the Toronto based organization "Thamizh Ilakkiyath Thottam" or Tamil Literary Garden (TLG)

The TLG is a non - profit organization founded in 2001. It is committed to developing Tamil literature internationally. Among its activities is the conferring of a lifetime achievement award or Iyal Viruthu to a "writer, scholar, critic or editor , who over a period of time has made a very significant contribution to the growth or study of Tamil literature".

The "Iyal Viruthu" award comprises a commemorative plaque and an honorarium of 1500 Canadian dollars. It is awarded at an annual event jointly organized by the South Asia Studies Centre of the University of Toronto and the TLG. The recipient delivers a brief lecture before the award is presented. The lecture is organized by the South Asia Center.

Some of the past recipients were people like the editor/writer Sundara Ramaswamy, author Ganesh, critic Venkat Swaminathan and editor/publisher Pathmanabha Aiyer. The award for year 2005 went to George Hart at a ceremony held at the Seeley

Hall in Toronto University. Those familiar with his work and his efforts in promoting Thamizh studies would feel indeed that the man is worthy of the award.

It has been the good fortune of Thamizh that many Western scholars have contributed greatly to its growth and development. The role of Western scholars in rediscovering the virtues of classical Thamizh literature and reviving fresh interest has been particularly commendable.

George Hart belongs to a long line of such scholars who were greatly enamoured of Thamizh and helped promote modern scholarship of the language. Hart has written several books, monographs and papers. He was instrumental in establishing the Tamil Studies chair at Berkeley. Hart's role in persuading the powers that be in India to confer "Chemmolli" or Classical language status to Thamizh deserves praise.

I have read only two of his books. I have also read some papers and texts of interviews given by him. His impressive scholarship was not the only reason that motivated me in attending the event. It was my intention to meet him personally and express my gratitude for a remarkable gesture that helped me and many others several years ago.

The year was 1990. I had relocated to Canada from Sri Lanka the previous year. Journalism was/is both a profession and vocation for me. I was involved with a few others in reviving Canada's first Thamizh journal

"Senthamarai" that was practically defunct then. We made it a fortnightly and then weekly. I was its editor.

This was a time when desktop publishing was going great guns with the Thamizh Diaspora. Tamil fonts however had not been sufficiently developed then. In our case we relied on the Thamizh font developed by George Hart. This academic had not only pioneered this font but had with great magnanimity placed it on public domain. It was freely available to all users. Our publishing venture would not have succeeded then without George Hart's generosity.

Subsequently others - many "Yaarlpaanam Thamizhar" included - perfected and developed fonts that were far superior to the pioneering effort of George Hart. But these were not free but sold for large sums. Like many others we too went in for the new fonts and the old font went slowly out of use.

But I have often wondered what we would have done then without George Hart's font. The irony of a "material" Westerner providing his font free in order to foster modern Thamizh whereas other "Thamizhar" were making fonts and money simultaneously has not missed me.

It was against this backdrop that I met George Hart in person for the first time and conveyed my belated appreciation and gratitude. He modestly changed the subject and spoke of those days of font - making. Hart related how a Malaysian Thamizh Muthu Nedumaran and he had embarked on this pioneering venture simultaneously yet separately.

George Hart grew up in Washington where his father was a Federal Judge. His fascination for languages began with Russian in high school. Then it was Sanskrit. Later came Thamizh. After obtaining his Ph D in Sanskrit from Harvard George Hart i went to Chicago university in Wisconsin to teach .There he came across the legendary AK Ramanujam .This was the beginning of his love affair with Thamizh.

Hart learnt his Sanskrit from KV Seshathrinathan and Thamizh from

Irama. Subramaniam. His wife Kausalya who hails from Madurai the seat of the Sangam's is a Tamil scholar too. His creditable achievement was in translating epic and heroic Sangham poetry into English. His role in helping Thamizh obtain classical language status in India was commendable.

Among his reputed works are

1. The Poems of Ancient Tamil, Their Milieu and Their Sanskrit Counterparts

2. A Rapid Sanskrit Method

3. The Four Hundred Songs of War and Wisdom: An Anthology of Poems from Classical Tamil, the Purananuru

4. Poets of the Tamil Anthologies: Ancient Poems of Love and War

5. The Forest Book of the Ramayana of Kampan.

He is currently engaged in translating the "Pathittrup Pattu". In his lecture "Tamil as a Classical language" George Hart quoted extensively from the "Purananooru". It was a rare treat to hear him explain in Thamizh the intricacies of vintage poetry. The TLG is to be congratulated in its "Iyal Viruthu" choice for 2005.

Meanwhile the TLG also inaugurated two new annual awards for contemporary fiction and non - fiction. The 'Best Fiction for the Year in Tamil' award went to So. Tharman for his novel titled 'Koochai'. the 'Best Non-Fiction for the Year in Tamil' went to CreA S.Ramakrishnan, who was the Managing Editor of Tamil - Tamil - English dictionary known as Tharkalath Thamizh Akarathi. They are to be awarded plaques and honorariums of 500 dollars each . Both recipients are from India and were not present in person.

[www.transcurents.com]



(Continued from page 13)

Midland Shrine.....

efforts were made to purchase the *Standen farm* where the present Shrine perches. Fr. Fillion organized local ship builders and oversaw the construction of the church. Stained glass windows, altars, pews, and Stations of the Cross were secured from St. Peter's Cathedral in London, Ontario, and St. Peter's Church in Toronto. Lumber was donated by local mills and stone was brought in from Longford, Ontario.

In September 1925, around 50 local workmen began construction under the direction of Mr. Morgan James Callahan. Nine months later the Shrine

was officially opened and Cardinal O'Connell of Boston, who was in the area by chance, *blessed the church*, June 25th, Friday, 1926. It was dedicated to honour St. Joseph, the Patron Saint of Canada (since 1624) and Patron Saint of the Jesuit Mission to the Hurons (1634- 1650) .

The Honourable Minister of Forestry and Mines, *Mr. McCrea, unveiled the front statues of Brebeuf and Lalemant* on Saturday. The following day, June 27th, Sunday, Archbishop McNeil of Toronto presided over a solemn pontifical High Mass with six other Ontario Bishops. *13,000 pilgrims were present at the Mass.* This day would begin over 75 years of Catholic devotion and spiritual blessings.

Gerald Henry was cured instantly of stuttering when relics of the Martyrs were applied to him by Fr. Dugas SJ . *Martyrs' Shrine had an inn* and numerous statues dotting the grounds.

In 1927, *Fr. Joseph Keating SJ* became the Director and the Shrine quickly became a place of refuge and source of strength for Catholics in Ontario and the rest of Canada.

On May 29th, 1930, approximately 100 (some sources say 300) Canadians *made their way to Rome* for the Canonization of the Martyrs. *They would visit many holy sites in Europe, including Conde- sur-Vire, the birthplace of St. Jean de Brebeuf.*

On June 29th, the Feast day of St.

Peter and Paul, *Pope Pius XI declared The Canadian Martyrs as Saints* to a throng of 60,000. Back in Canada, *over 7000 pilgrims attended an outdoor Mass at the Shrine*, presided by Archbishop Neil McNeil of Toronto. The eight Martyrs become the first Saints of Canada and will be forever known as Apostles to the New World.

(To Be Continued on Next Issue...)

**PRESERVING THE PAST:
PILGRIMS, PAGEANTS, AND
CANADIAN IDENTITY**

1931- 1949

“Unlike rights, which are almost always attached to a legal anchor, duties need not have any legal basis.”

Extracts of a speech made by Nihal Jayamanne, P.C., President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka at the Prize Giving of Stafford International School, Colombo:

I have on many occasions addressed adult audiences including lawyers, law students and the business community.

But this invitation was special; I was to address a younger generation of students of varying ages. This burdened me with a greater responsibility.

My first concern was to decide on a theme for my speech. After much thought and deliberation I decided that I will speak to you of duties.

Sadly, we find all around us, a general break down of law and order and an almost total lack of values and decency.

We have been told time and time again by religious leaders and self-proclaimed preachers that what sets apart man from other living beings is his intelligence. We consider ourselves (rather foolishly) to be better than the



Founded in 1985, Stafford International School is one of the first private international Schools to be established in Sri Lanka.

Let us make it our duty to be Civic Conscious

other creatures with whom we share this world.

ut we know that this is far from the truth.

Remember always, that we are entitled to call ourselves civilized, only if we instinctively avoid doing any act which will hurt, harm or even inconvenience others.

We can only do this if we are conscious of our duties towards our fellow humans and all creatures of this world.

In recent times we have given excessive importance to our rights and the enforcement of such rights. How often have we seen groups of people screaming in public, waving placards on which strong and abusive slogans are written, demanding that they be given what they consider is rightfully due to them?

All this aggression is reluctantly tolerated by society because these are said to be ways and means of fighting for rights.

Clenched fists and angry faces and abusive slogans are now synonymous with the fight for rights.

There is something wrong in the affairs of men.

Now is the time to look at the present state of affairs in society in a different light, with a different eye.

Let us therefore unclench our fists, wipe the anger from our faces and replace foul language with smiles.

Let us place our unclenched hands with open palm against our chest and ask ourselves the question “What are my duties to my neighbour?”

Unlike rights, which are almost always attached to a legal anchor, duties need not have any legal basis.

Some of the duties of which I shall speak are independent of a

corresponding right.

The duties which are important are not those which are sanctioned when breached, but those which are performed out of love and regard, we have for our fellow human beings and other creatures.

How many times have you seen a man screaming and protesting when some one has dumped garbage in front of his gate? And how many times have you seen the very same man dumping his garbage in front of someone else's gate?

He is indignant and screams if his rights are violated, but he is totally unconcerned and oblivious to his duties.

A client came to me recently to get my advice as to what legal remedy he has against his neighbour, who carelessly obstructs the entrance to his house by parking cars across his gate.

While I was in my chamber with this client, I saw my wife Rohini going around speaking to my juniors and the other clients who were in the outer chamber and the sitting area.

Ultimately she excused herself and came to my chamber and inquired from this client as to where he had parked his car.

He just coolly told her that he had parked it across my gate, thus depriving my wife driving her car into her own house.

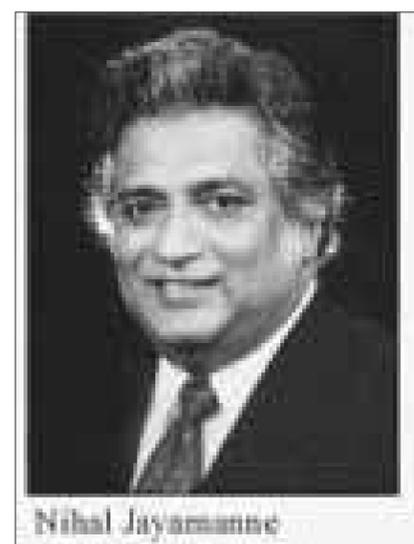
This is a typical example of fighting for your rights without performing your duties. This client did not even realize that he had done something wrong.

If you do your duty your neighbours rights are automatically looked after.

So let us take the trouble to structure our lives on a duty based regime.

Let us constantly be concerned of our duties. If we do this then there will be a dramatic change in our society, aggression and tension will give way to peace and calm.

It is when you are young and learning that these good values are best instilled in you.



Nihal Jayamanne

The foundations of decency must be laid in young and enthusiastic minds.

We owe a duty to the younger generation to set an example.

It is a fact that your children will emulate your bad qualities more readily than your good qualities.

So let us parents set the standards. Let us take the trouble to do our duty by our neighbour. If we do that we will be doing our duty by our children.

You are required to save a damsel in distress and not to be the cause of her distress. You are required to give your seat to the elderly and the differently abled, not to rush and occupy it before they do. You are required to help those who are less fortunate than you, not to rob them of the little they have.

This school has a reputation for discipline. That is good, and you should be proud of it. Discipline is nothing but training people to do their duty.

So my dear students let us make it our duty to show concern for other people's feelings. Let us make it our duty to be polite. Let us make it our duty not to inconvenience others. Let us make it our duty to be civic conscious.

Let us take pride in being decent. In today's society there is no complement greater than to be referred to as a decent person. Remember no one is born noble. They only are noble who are good. So let us strive to be noble.

The speaker, a President's Counsel, is the President of the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL)

Children are learning maths can be fun, thanks to an innovative online tutoring company called HeyMath, reports the BBC's Soutik Biswas.

Like many of his friends, 12-year-old Indian student SK Ramnandan used to find mathematics "rather mechanical and unattractive" and a bit of a chore.

This was before HeyMath [<http://www.heymath.net>] happened to him.

HeyMath is an India-based online maths tutoring company which uses innovative, interactive lessons, peppered with animation, graphics and quizzes for students and teachers alike.

Today, Ramnandan, a student of Padma Seshadri School in the southern Indian city of Madras (Chennai), is a champion number cruncher and in love with maths.

"The lessons are practical and logical. I don't lose concentration. I remember concepts more clearly," he says.

Ramnandan's peer in Singapore, Deborah Chan, also says HeyMath

How maths can be great fun

lessons have helped her in a more rounded understanding of maths.

"The step-by-step working shown in the lessons has helped me in the understanding of the various topics," says the student of the city's Methodist Girls School.

Ramnandan and Chan are not the only students who say learning maths has become fun thanks to HeyMath's interactive lessons.

'Dull and boring'

Today, the company sends out its lessons to more than 60 schools all over the world. The company charges each student about \$100 a year for its lessons. In India, it offers schools its lessons at 600 rupees (\$13) a year.

HeyMath, which is fast becoming the maths back office and tuitions provider of the world, has earned praise from far and wide.

The company has received some 2,500 inquiries from public schools in the US. The department of education in

Massachusetts has included HeyMath as an approved learning resource.

"HeyMath's mission is to be the math Google - to establish a web-based platform that enables every student and teacher to learn from the 'best teacher in the world' for every math concept and to be also able to benchmark themselves against their peers globally," says Thomas L Friedman, best-selling author of *The World Is Flat*.

At its quiet and functional office in central Madras, 35 employees, including maths teachers, programmers and animation and graphic designers work on the content and lessons.

Six years ago, two young Indians - Harsh Rajan and Nirmala Sankaran - quit their jobs managing cash and derivatives with Credit Suisse and Citibank in London to return home and start up the company.

They had found that many students were getting put off by conventional ways of learning maths.

"We were seeing a lot of children tuning out of maths in Britain. They were finding it dull and boring. On the other hand, maths and science are drilled into your DNA in India," says Mr Rajan.

"So we thought - why don't they make the lessons interesting enough for children? The fact is that if you cannot connect with maths by grade five or six, the aversion to the subject begins and keeps hardening."

In partnership with the Millennium Mathematics Project at Cambridge University, the two began devising lessons for students and teachers alike.

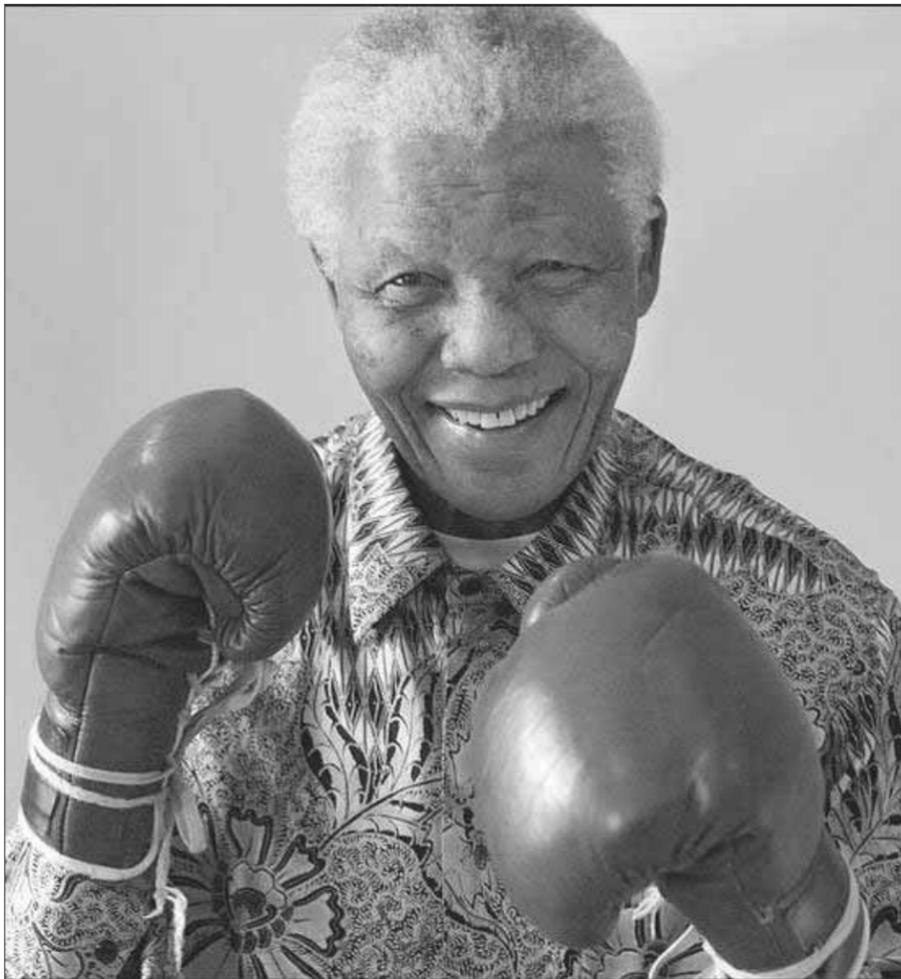
"On the one hand, children are getting put off by maths. On the other, there is a massive shortage of good maths teachers. So we tried to address both with HeyMath," says Mr Rajan.

The effort was to retain traditional knowledge and pedagogy in teaching and save teachers time with tailor-made lessons.

For students, the challenge was to make maths relevant to real life

(Continued on page 11)

88th Birthday Poets hail Nelson Mandela's life



*There is fire here,
Which no prison
Can kill in this man;
And I watch it in Mandela.*

This poem was written during the darkest days, but it is full of fire - and a sense of what was to come was borne out when Mandela was, eventually released.

Like everyone else, John Matshikiza remembers that day: "I was in London, I was with my mother and my daughter and my partner and we were all just bowled over by what was happening.

"We'd been waiting all of our lives for this. That is all I can say. It was the whole of my life."

Freedom

That same day in February 1990 was evoked by poet Chris Mann in his poem "Tamed", published in 1992:

*You come out onto the dais,
distant as a god, a totem, raise
your arms and we roar
with an adoration like a rage.*

As well as spanning more than 30 years, the poems come from everywhere in the world - most of course from South Africa, as well as many from elsewhere on the continent.

Armindo Vaz d'Almeida, a former prime minister of Sao Tome and Principe, wrote "Poem to the Southern Wind" in 1987. This is an extract of a translation from the original Portuguese:

*And the steps of men keep going
patiently counting the stones of the
road
long road on which you
encapsulating the spirit of insurgency
like a light of inspiring brilliance
you rise against the pale destiny
imposed on your mutilated flag.*

Critical

But perhaps surprisingly, the collection also includes poems that are critical of a man seen by many as a hero.

"There is also one really interesting poem which is written by an apartheid -

one could call him - apparatchik, someone who worked within the apartheid state," says Richard Bartlett, the editor of the collection.

"He wrote a poem saying that Mandela got what he deserved and that if he hadn't been thrown in prison South Africa wouldn't be as free a country as it is now and this was written in the mid 1970s, so that is one of the poems that is not just praising Mandela."

Gerrit Fourie's poem "Rivonia", written in Afrikaans in 1976, translates as follows:

Let them be remembered, and what they wanted to do:

*let the fear and the blood and violence,
death*

hatred, vengeance, vandalism and looting, anguish,

pain, agony, noise and racket and rape,

*let this, the rejection of order,
discipline,*

civilisation, love of humanity, let this, I say, never

in all eternity as long as there are those who can think, ever

be forgotten or denied.

But the majority of the poems are conducting an intimate conversation with Mandela himself - from the endless years when he was in prison to the moment of release and beyond.

Published in 2004, Jekwu Ikeme's "When Mandela Goes" imagines life after a man who has dominated South African history for more than half a century.

*When you go chosen soldier in the
crusade of dreams*

*our tears shall not cloud your journey
home.*

*When you go Madiba your nobility
shall be our lasting inheritance*

*this land you so love shall continue to
love*

*we shall trail the long and majestic
walk*

*your gallant walk shall be our cross and
shepherd.*

A book of poetry celebrating the life of Nelson Mandela has been launched to mark the South African statesman's 88th birthday on July 18th.

The book, titled Halala Madiba (Hail Mandela), is more than an anthology about one man.

It is also the story - through poems from around the world - of South Africa's freedom struggle.

The poets include former statesmen, reggae and rap artists, performance poets, and even a 12-year-old child.

It follows the trajectory of Mandela from freedom fighter to "grand old man".

It was the long years of incarceration

on Robben Island, beginning in 1963, which inspired the first poems.

One of the earliest is "And I Watch it in Mandela" by South African John Matshikiza, written in 1974.

It is not for the safety of silence

That this man has opened his arms to lead.

The strength of his words hangs in the air

As the strength in his eyes remains on the sky;

And the years of impatient waiting draw on

While this man burns to clear the smoke in the air.

The annual saparam and chariot festivals were held at The Varasithi Vianayagar in Scarborough, on July 21st and 22nd, 2006. Devotees flocked to the temple seeking blessings at the annual festivals honouring Lord Ganesha, the obstacle remover.
Picture: Camal Jay





Dr. Radhika Coomarasamy

“Solution for Sri Lanka is the Oslo formulation”

Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict Deshamanya Dr. Radhika Coomaraswamy - in her first exclusive interview in Sri Lanka - in conversation with Namini Wijedasa.

not lead to secession. We also have to persuade the Tamils that the powers devolved will be meaningful and that they will have a right to determine matters in areas where they are a majority. In the meantime, we must not forget the Muslims. Their right to participation and protection must also be part of any structure set up for the solution of the ethnic conflict.

Q: What would you say are the challenges to peace?

A: Distrust. I think anyone analysing the situation from a rational, objective point of view can draw up a solution. However, there is so much distrust, hatred and emotion that it is difficult to move forward. Lately, for some reason, the forces of hatred have taken control of our political discourse on all sides. It is important that we move forward towards a language and an attitude that help us in the struggle for reconciliation.

Q: In your opinion, what role does the international community play in Sri Lanka's peace process?

A: Sri Lanka is a sovereign state and with regard to political processes, as opposed to human-rights issues, the international community can only be present with the consent of the Sri Lankan government. Nevertheless, I feel it is in enlightened self-interest to invite the international community.

There is such deep distrust between the two parties to the conflict that Sri Lanka needs an honest broker. I think we should ask the international community to help us in negotiating a final settlement and in providing humanitarian assistance to our people.

Q: Do you feel that international intervention or involvement has shaped Sri Lanka's peace process in any way? Has this been positive or negative?

A: I believe international involvement has been positive in general. There have, perhaps, been some mistakes; but in the long run, the voice of the international community has been the objective, detached voice that we in Sri Lanka need to hear if we are to turn the tide.

Q: The crisis in Sri Lanka's peace process has worsened. In April, a suicide bomb seriously injured the Army Commander and the government declared national security to be a priority. Do you see any reason to be optimistic?

A: Well, optimism is difficult in the short term. However, no matter what happens, at some point – perhaps out of weariness – I am confident we will negotiate that final contract – the political solution that



Ms. Namini Wijedasa

is needed for the people to live in dignity in Sri Lanka. I think it will be within a united Sri Lanka, but with a different political arrangement. If we are wise, this will come sooner rather than later.

If we continue to bait each other, engage in violent oneupmanship and generally move away from the spirit of reconciliation, it will take much longer. We must ensure, however, that there is not only a political solution to the ethnic problem, but that democracy and tolerance are also strengthened. I think the international community has a duty to ensure that.

Q: In the past few months, we have seen many targeted attacks against both Tamil and Sinhalese civilians. What are your reactions to this?

A: I think the targeting of civilians is a terrible aspect of war. The only way to prevent that is to ensure that there is no war. Even in times of peace, civilians can be targeted. We have to strengthen the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission and, perhaps, set up a separate mechanism for human-rights monitoring as well.

Q: The voices of extremism from within all communities in the country have grown stronger. How do you assess this?

A: I feel that insecurity breeds extremism. I think the growth of extremist voices is a sign of that insecurity. If we make people feel more secure about their future, about their place in the sun and a life with dignity, the voices will lessen.

Q: What – or who – can compel the two parties of the conflict to return to talks?

A: They have to come to the realisation that there is no military solution, so it requires another military stalemate.

Q: You are widely recognised for your role as an advocate for women's rights. Did you ever think you would secure such a high-profile appointment to

protect child rights?

A: In many ways, there are very common elements between women and children. In many cases, they are vulnerable groups in need of international protection. In many cases, those who commit violence against them are given impunity – and often, women and children's lives are interlinked.

However, the international regime for the protection of children is far greater. One of the most innovative developments has been Security Council Resolution 1612, which provides for the naming of groups that engage in child recruitment for combat. This is an extraordinary development, with the UN Security Council taking an interest in social and human-rights issues. It is truly a rare occurrence.

Q: What are your plans for the office of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict?

A: At the moment, we are in the process of building a strategic vision for the office for the next two years. In many ways, it is the era of application – especially when it comes to child soldiers. International standards and frameworks have been set. Now we must apply those standards and frameworks to concrete situations. This, I think, has to be the centrepiece of any strategic vision.

I also feel this position has two roles. One is as a special representative on children and armed conflict. This is an important issue. It has seized the conscience of the Security Council and it is, therefore, important that we push forward with the agenda set out by Olara Otunnu. We must do everything to bring an end to the six violations against children: child soldiers, killing and maiming, abduction, sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access.

Q: Otunnu is, indeed, remembered for his blacklist, or list of shame, and for urging the UN to introduce stronger sanctions against state and non-state parties who are guilty of violations against children during war situations. Will you take this further?

A: It is my duty to take it further. It is important not only for children, but for all issues that deal with impunity in times of war.

Q: What concrete measures do you intend taking?

A: These are already spelt out in the Security Council resolutions. With regard to child soldiers, the concrete measures are already in place. There are national task forces that will be reporting to us, there is a Security Council Working Group that will hear our inputs, and there is the annual report on concrete situations and specific parties.

Q: In July 2005, the Security Council adopted a resolution relating to the protection of

(Continued on page 22)



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Solution for Sri Lanka.....

children in armed conflict. What, in your opinion, is the most important aspect of this resolution?

A: It allows for a process to name and shame parties that engage in child recruitment, and other grave violations of international law relating to children. It also carries the threat of sanctions.

Q: A new report from the Watchlist On Children And Armed Conflict says that, notwithstanding considerable force and pressure from the UN, child soldiers are multiplying in the Democratic Republic Of Congo. Despite the world's best efforts, we have failed to end the scourge

of child recruitment. Where have we gone wrong?

A: Whenever we address human-rights issues, there are two planes. The first is to understand the phenomenon, its roots and its history. The second is to eradicate it. Child soldiers are not a new phenomenon. In most of the world where there have been guerrilla struggles and where whole communities get involved in the fight or are forced to get involved in the fight, children are often expected to play their role.

What is needed is to change that pattern of behaviour globally. We have to make people understand that the damage to children is long lasting and profound. That is why it is a war crime. Changing these behaviour patterns is difficult because many of these groups also openly reject mainstream society.

Q: Many analysts feel that the UN could have done more to protect children in armed conflict. Some maintain that the UN simply skims the surface with its resolutions and that concrete measures will never be taken against offenders. Do you feel the same?

A: The Security Council is a very political place. For concrete measures to take place, one must deal with the politics. However, on the issue of children, there is a resonance in both the Security Council and the General Assembly. Somehow, this issue often gets by the politics. So, perhaps, there will be a chance of concrete UN action.

Q: What is the most important role of the UN? Has it regained credibility after the war in Iraq, where the US and the UK invaded a country in defiance of the UN?

A: I think the UN is just getting a lot of bad press. The world could not survive without organisations such as the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, UNHCR, etc. They do an enormous amount of work. I think the UN's human rights and humanitarian agencies really work hard on the ground.

Why the UN gets bad press is that it seems politically impotent or biased. In that sense, it is the political process at the

Security Council that is at fault. In such a context, the UN is only the sum of its parts – the nation states of which it is composed. The UN only mirrors and reflects their political positioning.

Q: What is the big picture of child rights in Sri Lanka? How do we measure up? Good, can do much better or abysmal?

A: On these issues, it is better not to compare. Either we become complacent by saying we are better than other countries, or we become defensive. It is best to say that there are many issues with regard to child rights in Sri Lanka, from child soldiers to child trafficking.

Q: What is your most pressing area of concern regarding child rights in Sri Lanka?

A: If the right to life is the most precious of all rights, then the most pressing issue is child soldiers. The international community has also recognised this as the preeminent concern. The International Criminal Court makes child recruitment a war crime and the Security Council, in an unprecedented move, has begun listing parties that violate these concerns with the possibility of sanctions.

Q: What is your opinion of the LTTE and child recruitment?

A: The LTTE must realise that child recruitment is one of the gravest violations of international law. Not only has the International Criminal Court begun to prosecute individuals for child recruitment as a war crime and a crime against humanity, it is the only human-rights issue on which the Security Council has acted – monitoring and reviewing the situation, and threatening sanctions.

Child recruitment destroys children. According to research, they lose the capacity to tell right from wrong. They suffer terrible trauma and, if peace comes, they become delinquent. The LTTE must realise this and ensure that no more children will be recruited – and that the ones who are recruited are released.

Q: UNICEF's halfway homes for child soldiers in Sri Lanka have been a failure, even by their own admission. Can you think of a workable system to decommission child soldiers?

A: Well, decommissioning is mostly successful if it is linked to a successful peace process. If we do not have a successful peace process, then there must be a system of independent monitoring. I think an action plan involving all three parties – the government, the international community and the LTTE – with targets and time lines, has to be negotiated. But it is difficult if there is no peace process.

Q: Can international pressure have any bearing on the behaviour of non-state parties such as the LTTE, which has continued to recruit children to its ranks? Even

Otunnu's celebrated list of shame seems to have had no effect.

A: I think international pressure can work. It has to be targeted and highlighted. I feel there has been some improvement, but definitely not enough with regard to the LTTE. It may have recruited less in the past few months, but it is not releasing any of the children it has recruited.

Q: What do you think of civil-society action in Sri Lanka – whether it be in regard to child, human or women's rights?

A: We have an active and vibrant civil society. However, it is mostly small institutions led by charismatic individuals. If real change is to take place, we still have to rely on political parties, trade unions, religious organisations and other traditional institutions. We should spend more time with them and have them take up some of these causes.

Q: In 1996, you delivered the Rajani Thiraganama Memorial Lecture on 'LTTE Women: Is This Liberation?' What are your current views on female LTTE cadre, particularly their use as suicide bombers?

A: I wrote that piece because I am a believer in non-violence and I do not believe that women engaging in violence is an answer to anything. But that is my own personal opinion.

Q: You successfully headed Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission (HRC) for several years and have indepth knowledge about the country's situation. How do you rate the HRC's achievements during your tenure?

A: There were relative successes, but I also feel a great deal more needs to be done. Some of our successes were the introduction of the zero-tolerance policy on torture, which has had an impact, as well as surprise visits to custodial institutions and visits to the Eastern Province, after we highlighted some of the human-rights issues there.

Our Disaster Relief Monitoring Unit, set up after the tsunami, did considerable work and we initiated a database on disappearances. We started the committee for the protection of migrant workers and held a national conference on the rights of people with disabilities. These were only some of the initiatives we took. However, there still remain problems of delays in the caseload. Many of these cases relate to promotions and transfers in the public service.

Q: The term of the HRC commissioners expired in April 2006 and new members must be appointed by the Constitutional Council, which itself is not functioning. Against the backdrop of the fragile situation in the country, is there a danger of delays in this process?

A: There is a tremendous problem with this. The commission has 200 staff

members – and at the moment, they are leaderless. In addition, the commission cannot summon people or make recommendations. So the thousands of cases before the commission would have come to a standstill. Something has to be done. The Constitutional Council must be appointed.

Q: There has been a massive outcry about torture in police custody. How would you assess the extent of this practice in Sri Lanka?

A: Torture is widespread and endemic because there isn't enough training of police personnel in investigative skills – and so, torture is the first method of interrogation. However, things have improved somewhat, according to NGOs working on the ground.

Q: Are you worried that if the HRC is not activated soon, the police will return to business as usual?

A: Yes. One of the HRC's main reasons for existence after the terrible violence of the 1980s was to prevent torture. Unless the HRC is activated, a main safeguard against torture will be removed.

Q: How do you assess the status of women in Sri Lanka?

A: We have some of the best physical quality-of-life indices – for instance, maternal mortality rates, education, health and so on. But we also have specific problems including discrimination at the highest managerial levels, violence against women, personal laws and poor political representation.

Q: Apart from the conflict, what are Sri Lanka's most serious issues? How can the nation turn around and become a successful state?

A: For Sri Lanka, and for the rest of the Third World, the most important issue is that of equity. Globalisation has its positive side, but it has created a great gulf between the haves and the have-nots. This terrible divide is widening, increasing frustration and anger. It is important that we realise this, and try and take the part of equitable development. This means being sensitive to class, caste, gender, ethnic distinctions, and protecting vulnerable groups such as children and internally displaced persons.

Q: What are Sri Lanka's saving graces? What have we done right?

A: Our saving grace is our resilience. We have gone through terrible times, but we are a resilient people. I also think that democracy has been an important part of our post-colonial history. We must protect it – not only in the south, but in all parts of the country.

Q: How would you assess the LTTE's respect for, or observance of, human rights?

A: When I was Chairperson of the HRC,

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Solution for Sri Lanka.....

we found the allegations with regard to LTTE violations were impunity for alleged political killings, the recruitment of child soldiers, preventing the freedom of association of groups and printing presses as well as extortion. The Muslim community also felt it was discriminated against.

Q: How would you assess the government's respect for or observance of human rights?

A: Well, during the ceasefire, it was better than that of the LTTE – but towards the end of last year, there were some alarming events. The security forces were again acting recklessly.

There were allegations with regard to a rape case against the navy, the killing of five students in Trincomalee and tolerance for Tamil paramilitary action such as the killing of Joseph Pararajasingham. There were also cases of torture and extrajudicial killings in the south, primarily aimed at organised crime.

Q: Do you see a transformation of the LTTE for the better?

A: We can only say that there is plenty of room for improvement with regard to human rights.

Q: Do you see a positive transformation of the Sri Lankan state?

A: I feel that the majority of Sinhalese people and a majority of Sinhalese parliamentarians are ready for some type of political

solution that will involve the transformation of the Sri Lankan state.

Q: In your opinion, what is the situation of Tamils in Sri Lanka?

A: I think there was a well-founded fear of persecution in the past. I think the riots of the 1950s and the 1980s made them physically insecure. I feel the Sinhala Only Act was discriminatory and that they have a right to ask for a sharing of power. However, their situation is similar to the struggle of many minorities around the world, and the choice of armed struggle as the primary means of fighting for their rights has backfired and destroyed the fabric of that society.

Q: What is the situation of Muslims and other minorities in Sri Lanka?

A: The Muslims living in the north and east have the identical grievances against the LTTE that the Tamils used to have against the Sinhalese. The failure of the Tamil political leadership to realise this is one of the great weaknesses of the Tamil nationalist cause.

Q: The armed forces and police have often been accused of paying scant regard to human rights. Do you agree?

A: I think in times of war, armies do not always respect human rights. Though one would expect them to behave, one can only hope that there is no war – and then there will be no abuses.

When I was Chairperson of the HRC, I found that torture had become endemic to the police and its first resort with regard to investigation – especially at the local level. Luckily, due to pressure from within the police force and the international community, this is changing. We're now seeing changes.

- Courtesy: Lanka Monthly Digest

Tamil Tiger 'regret' over Gandhi

Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger rebels have expressed "regret" over the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi 15 years ago.

Top rebel negotiator Anton Balasingham told private Indian channel NDTV that Mr Gandhi's killing by a suicide bomber was a "monumental tragedy".

Correspondents say it is the closest the rebels have come to admitting they were responsible for the murder.

India was the first country to ban the Tigers as a result of the killing.

We call upon the government of India and the people of India to be magnanimous

Rebel negotiator Anton Balasingham

The BBC's Ethirajan Anbarasan says the rebels' expression of regret may be linked to their increased international isolation after recent bans by the European Union and Canada.

He says the rebels feel they need some sort of support from India, which once armed and supported them.

'Gulf

"As far as that event is concerned, I would say it is a great tragedy, a monumental historical tragedy for which we deeply regret," Mr Balasingham said.

"We call upon the government of India and the people of India to be magnanimous, to put the past behind and to approach the ethnic question in a different perspective."

Mr Gandhi was opposition leader at the

time of his death in 1991, and was campaigning in the southern state of Tamil Nadu in the run-up to a general election when he was killed.

Mr Balasingham said that at the time of Mr Gandhi's death, a gulf had arisen between the rebels and India.

India sent a peace-keeping force to Sri Lanka to disarm the Tigers but ended up fighting them, and withdrew in 1990.

Mr Balasingham said that he now hoped India would intervene once again in the Sri Lanka dispute, and that the rebels wanted a "new relationship" with Delhi.

"India has been silent for the last 15 years and adopted a detached role," he said, "but now there is... the possibility of war emerging, she cannot keep quiet."

'Philosophy of terror'

But his overtures were met with a firm rebuff from Delhi which ruled out any direct talks with the rebels.

"The people of India cannot forget the dastardly crime committed by the Tamil Tigers or at their behest," India's junior Foreign Minister Anand Sharma - and former aide of Rajiv Gandhi - said.

"Seeking our forgiveness would be tantamount to endorsing their philosophy of terror, violence and assassination.

"India is for peace, stability and the unity of Sri Lanka and we have been supportive of the peace process and it is very sad it has got derailed," he said.

Indian courts are still seeking Tiger leader Prabhakaran and rebel intelligence chief Pottu Amman for the murder of Rajiv Gandhi.



Lee Kuan Yew's predictions

"Sri Lanka — the country will never be put together again".

By H. A. Dias

Kuan Yew: The Man and his Ideas. Herein, Lee Kuan Yew talks about his visit to old Ceylon in 1956 and how he wished to make Singapore like Colombo. He talks about our sterling reserves, the two universities and the educated talent and adds that according to what the British and American liberals used to say, Sri Lanka ought to have flourished. But it didn't.

Singapore a resource less island is today a big economic giant, whereas Sri Lanka with all its aforesaid advantages has been doomed both politically and economically. Corruption and terrorism is spreading its tentacles and has now gripped

and throttled the nation. What led to our downfall? According to this great man with a vision we have had weak or

wrong leaders.

Our first Prime Minister, the Father of the Nation, had a mission and a vision. His untimely death started the division both politically and communally. Now these divisions are daily gaining momentum and have come to a stage that each one is trying to strangle the others neck. One political party does not allow the other to gain mileage and, it is this struggle that has divided the people, created racism and terrorism.

We are not short of able politicians and intellectuals who could work for the betterment of this beautiful country. But, most unfortunately, most politicians are only self-motivated. When will they acquire and gain wisdom to think of the country? They have forgotten the famous saying that there should be a country for one to do politics.

Ex-Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, who proved to the world his might, has now in his graying years, thrown a challenge to our politicians. He has said in no uncertain terms in the above-mentioned book that "Sri Lanka — the country will never be put together again". It is a solid statement emphasized with a powerful word, "never".

Now, will we allow him to prove his wisdom and greatness or get together with the ever-ready intellectuals to prove that we Sri Lankans are greater than what others think.

It is true that we have made enough mistakes. And it is through mistakes that one learns. Now let us not repeat the mistakes and allow the 74-year-old in his days of retirement to be proved correct again.

Get together in a common forum and take the challenge! Wake up, it's our turn now to show the world our hidden, covetous acumen. My only wish is not to hear from even my neighbour, the utterances that our politicians are a set of barking dogs. [www.Island.lk]



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Why Israel's Campaign Will Likely Fail

By Michael Creswell

Many Americans see Israel's response to the capture of three of its soldiers as entirely justified. Why not, they ask, punish those who hold these men? Surely no other country would act differently in similar



UN Map of the Region

plan might lead to war, the United States chose not to exert pressure on it to desist. Convinced that the United States would not interfere, Israel continued with its audacious gambit. The mighty Israeli Defense Force rolled into Lebanon. Yet, unaware of the true aim of the campaign, the force failed to prepare itself properly and found itself bogged down against the Syrian Army.

While the Bush administration hesitates to use diplomacy to resolve the current crisis, the United States took action in May 1983. Determined to end the expanding conflict, U.S. Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Envoy Philip Habib engaged in a round of shuttle diplomacy and brokered a cease fire. Israel eventually withdrew the IDF from Lebanon in 1985, save for a "security zone" along the length of the Lebanese-Israeli border that Israeli forces occupied until 2000.

Israel's campaign in 1982 provoked Hezbollah -- then a fledgling group made up of diverse militant Shia -- to coalesce into the powerful force it is today. In addition, 241 American servicemen, sent to Lebanon to oversee the withdrawal of the PLO from Lebanon, perished in a terrorist attack in Beirut.

The situation today obviously differs from that in the early 1980s. The Cold War has ended, which enables the United States to focus on other issues besides its rivalry with the Soviet Union. In fact, Russia today is playing a constructive role in the Middle East, unlike the days when the hammer and

sickle flew over the Kremlin. In addition, both Lebanon and Iraq have installed governments friendly to the United States.

Yet the similarities between Israel's attacks on Lebanon in 1982 and 2006 are striking. As before, Israel's invasion of Lebanon has weakened Arab moderates and empowered extremists. Today, the democratic government of

Israel is also once again falling prey to "mission creep" -- initially setting limited goals, then expanding them markedly.

Israel has the right to defend itself, but this military campaign will not achieve its goals. Despite Israel's overwhelming military advantage, a battered but unbroken Hezbollah will live on to recruit and thus fight another day. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice now heads to the troubled region. She needs to employ U.S. power and influence to bring the warring parties together.

In 1982, the United States used its diplomatic might to engineer a

circumstances. The Bush administration agrees. It strongly supports Israeli military action in Lebanon against Hezbollah.

Yet Israel's military campaign is unlikely to succeed. In fact, it will probably backfire. Once before, Israel -- under the pretext of a justifiable military response -- harbored ambitious goals and expanded a local conflict into something larger. It didn't work then and it won't work now. Only U.S. diplomacy then prevented a bad situation from getting even worse. And only U.S. diplomacy can prevent the present crisis from spiraling out of control.

In 1982, Israel invaded southern Lebanon in order to raze Palestinian Liberation Organization bases used to fire rockets into Israel. But just like the bombing of Tyre and Beirut now, the true goal of the Israelis then was something different. That goal was to destroy the PLO and drive the Syrian Army out of Lebanon.

Although concerned that Israel's larger



Southern Beirut was subjected to a fierce bombardment from Israeli air attacks after the rocket strike in Haifa. Picture by Tyler Hicks - [Courtesy: www.nytimes.com]

Lebanon is on the verge of collapse, with Syria and Hezbollah poised to fill the vacuum.

Moreover, the invasion is driving the bitter terrorist rivals, the Palestine-based Hamas and Hezbollah, together in a lethal partnership. Israel now faces coordinated attacks on two fronts.

settlement. American failure to do so today will ensure that Israelis and Lebanese continue to die in vain. [Courtesy: HistoryNewsNetwork-George Mason University]

[Mr. Creswell is an associate professor of history at Florida State University]

"We will rise from the Dead" was the theme of the Thousands of the Tamils who gathered at Dundas Square (in Toronto). on Monday evening, July 24th, 2006. It was also observed to say

"Thanks You to Canada which received thousands of Tamils who received protection and giving an opportunity to start a new life.

The speakers also asked the Canadian Government to play an active role in the peace process and assist the Tamils to live in their traditional homeland with dignity and freedom.

1983 anti Tamil pogroms in which more than 3000 Tamils were killed and billions of rupees worth of property were destroyed by Sinhala thugs, sections of Sri Lankan armed forces, and ruling UNP party cadres, fuelled the Tamil armed struggle towards a

Thousands of Tamils gathered at Dundas Square (Toronto) to remember Black July Genocide 83

"Death Won't Deter Us," - By Sittarasu

defensible Tamil homeland. Thousands of Tamils fled the island to Tamil Nadu state in India, Europe, Canada and elsewhere. The recent extra-judicial killings in Sri Lanka Army (SLA) controlled areas in the North-East, during the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA), have added significance to the widespread observance by the Tamil Diaspora of the 23rd year remembrance of the anti-Tamil pogroms.

Black July 83 anti-Tamil pogroms in Southern Sri Lanka, that shocked the world, were the biggest of politically organized anti-Tamil riots of 1956, 1961, 1977 and 1983.

53 Tamil political prisoners in the Welikade maximum security prison in Colombo were killed by armed Sinhala criminals, on the 25th and 27th of July 1983.

Although the Sri Lankan authorities have attempted to describe the July 1983 anti-Tamil pogroms as Sinhala backlash to 13 SLA soldiers death on 23 July landmine

attack by the Tigers, records later exposed that the 83 riots displayed a preplanned, organized pogroms rather than spontaneous upsurge of violence against Tamils.

Paul Sieghart, the then Chariman of the British section of International Commission of Jurists, in a report titled **"Sri Lanka: A Mounting Tragedy of Errors, noted that the 83 July riots were "a series of deliberate acts, executed in accordance with a concerted plan, conceived and organized well in advance."**

"Clearly this [83 riots] was no spontaneous upsurge of communal hatred among the Sinhala people - nor was it as has been suggested in some quarters, a popular response to the killing of 13 soldiers in an ambush the previous day by Tamil Tigers, which was not even reported in the newspapers until the riots began," the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) report said.

One of the first accounts of the July 83 anti-Tamil pogroms, "Sri Lanka: the Holocaust and After," **revealed details on UNP led goon squads who went searching for Tamils**

with electoral lists containing details of Tamils in Colombo. The book gives details how the then Sri Lankan Industries Minister Cyril Mathew organized the pogroms in Kelaniya and Kandy and notes that the preparations to attack Tamils had been made in advance.

In 2004, 21 years after 1983, a token apology was issued by Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Again, in 1998 and onwards, mass graves, came to be known as Chemmani graves, were exposed in Jaffna. Hundreds of Tamil civilians who were abducted by the Sri Lanka Army after 1996, were reported missing. Amnesty International reported that the organization estimated as many 540 people as disappeared in Jaffna in mid-1996.

On October 25, 2000, Twenty-eight Tamil inmates, between the ages of 14-23 years, in Sri Lankan detention centre jail Bindunuwewa, were massacred while 14 other Tamil youths were seriously injured by Sinhala mobs and Sri Lanka Police.

The recent outburst of extra-judicial killings against Tamil media personnel, parliamentarians, traders, auto-rickshaw drivers and ordinary Tamils in an alleged campaign of terror, have caused an emotional sense of unity among the Tamil Diaspora, supporting the Tamil cause for a contiguous defensible homeland.



Sailing the straits for safety

By Dushiyanthini Kanagasabapathipillai

Over 5,700 people have made a treacherous journey to Tamil Nadu to escape violence in the North-East of Sri Lanka. About



**Archchanthini
Kumarakulasingham:**

"I am pregnant. But I have decided to leave this welfare centre and go to India to settle down. My mother is living in abroad. She sent some money. I am going to make use of that money, and accompany my husband. He is a fisherman, but does not go to the sea. We do not have any income to run the family. I should be financially fit, once my child is born. I can stitch dresses and earn an income when I go to India" says Archchanthini Kumarakulasingham (18) of Alles Garden welfare camp in Trincomalee, East of Sri Lanka.

58,000 refugees continue to live in existing 103 camps across Tamil Nadu since the 1980s.

NGOs in Tamil Nadu say the conditions in camps for Sri Lankans are "appalling". They fear that many parents in the camps simply cannot afford to send their children to school.

But many people particularly in Trincomalee continue to set their thoughts on sailing across the straits to Tamil Nadu.

Safety and security in Trincomalee seem to be their main concern for leaving and it surpasses any somber stars they may have to endure to continue their livelihood in Tamil Nadu.

**Portraits of humanity
contemplating on
leaving from
Trincomalee, as
featured in**

[www.allesgarden.blogspot.com:](http://www.allesgarden.blogspot.com)



Thevapriya Marsilian:

I have been living in this welfare camp for the past eleven years. I wish that, I would have continued my studies and working now. But due to poverty, I had to stop my studies. I am married now. My husband is a fisherman, but he does to go to the sea for fishing. I have also decided to leave this welfare camp and go to India by sea. It costs Rupees ten thousand per person to go from Mannar to India. There are more expenses involved such as transport charges from Trincomalee to Mannar, and food and accommodation. Since I do not have enough money for the expenses, I have decided to sell my jewellery including my wedding ring and my husband's. It's sad to sell wedding rings, but I have no other choice. I want to take care of the lives of my husband and elder brother. Their lives are more important to me than my jewellery. They have to live long" says Thevapriya Marsilian (18) of Alles Garden welfare camp in Trincomalee.

It is well known among academics and diplomats who have seriously studied the ethnic conflict in this island that the 1983 July pogrom was neither an isolated nor a spontaneous incident. Many more massacres have occurred without the international community bearing witness to it because they happened somewhere else in the island other than Colombo. It is also well known that the 1983 pogrom was well planned with mobs walking the streets with names and addresses of Tamils in Colombo.

The collation of comments by some eminent academics about the ethnic problem listed below should be enlightening to those who do not have time for a serious study of the ethnic conflict and the tendency in Sri Lanka for violence against Tamils:

Sri Lanka: Lost in the wilderness?

Prof S. T. Hettige, Dept of Sociology, University of Colombo

People and politicians in Sri Lanka get together to seek divine help to deal with existential problems that in many secular democracies in the west as well as the in the east have been effectively addressed by rational state intervention, guided not by spiritual leaders, but by scientists and professionals.

Buddhist Monks and Ethnic Politics: A War Zone in an Island Paradise Prof. H.L. Seneviratne Anthropology Today, April 2001, vol.17, no.2, pp.15-21

Buddhist monks who in the 1940s played a leading role in bringing about a nationalist revolution which unfortunately deteriorated into a narrow ethnic chauvinism. They are now a major obstacle to peace, which can only be achieved by sharing power with the Tamils.the new monks have mobilized themselves against legislative attempts to accommodate the minorities by devolution of power, and they have done so on every occasion that such attempts have been made.

The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict: Towards a Peacebuilding Education for Children

Explaining the July 1983 pogrom



[President Mahinda Rajapakse and Madam Shiranthi Rajapakse and others participating in religious observances. Pic Courtesy of Sudath Silva/Daily Mirror]

UNESCO has recently concluded that the tendency of history textbooks to exalt nationalism and address territorial disputes correlates with the xenophobia and violence found in many countries today. What is taught in history class and how it is taught is highly political and can foster either animosity or peace. A review of the textbooks used in the segregated schools of Sri Lanka in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, found Sinhalese textbooks scattered with images of Tamils as the historical enemies of the Sinhalese, while celebrating ethnic heroes who had vanquished Tamils in ethnic wars. Ignoring historical fact, these textbooks tended to portray Sinhalese Buddhists as the only true Sri Lankans, with Tamils, Muslims and Christians as non-indigenous and extraneous to Sri Lankan history. This version of national history according to one commentator, has been deeply decisive in the context of the wider state.

Buddhist Nationalism and Religious Violence in Sri Lanka-

Nick Gier

Recently the Sri Lankan people have witnessed more religious violence than ever before. It has spread from the conflict with the Tamil Tigers to Buddhist attacks on Muslims and Christians. A monk whose popular songs published by the government and sung as the Sri Lankan goes into battle:

Here we have the Buddhist equivalent of the radical Muslim Holy War. During 2003-04, 165 Sri Lankan Christian churches were attacked, resulting in the complete destruction of some, the stoning of parsonages, the smashing of statues, and the burning the Bibles and hymnals.

Community Conflict: Policy and Possibilities

Prof. Donald L. Horowitz Occasional Paper, Centre for the Study of Conflict, University of Ulster 1990

What I shall show is that Sri Lanka had the easier problem but political institutions that exacerbated it; Malaysia

had the harder problem but institutions that ameliorated it - and the difference is cast in terms of incentives for politicians to behave moderately.

At independence, anyone forecasting the ethnic future of the two countries would have predicted far more difficulty for Malaysia than for Sri Lanka. Relative group proportions, conceptions of group legitimacy, recent political events, the relations of elites of the various groups, and the political culture of the two countries all suggested a Sri Lankan advantage.

But where are they now? Despite those favourable conditions, Sri Lanka is in the midst of an ugly ethnic war. Despite Malaysia's unfavourable conditions, Malaysia is at peace.....(He goes on about ethnic outbidding by Sinhalese politicians).....An entire half generation of recruits for Tamil separatist organisations was thereby created, and the seeds were planted for guerrilla warfare. [Courtesy: LTTEPS]

SLAF Kfir jets bomb Vaakarai, 2 civilians wounded

Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) Kfir jets bombed thrice Mavilaru in Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) controlled Vaakarai region in Trincomalee district Wednesday July 26th, between 4:30 and 5:30 p.m. Two civilians, wounded in the bombing were rushed to Eachilampattu hospital, medical sources said. The wounded civilians were from Thonithandamadu, located close to Mavilaru, located in Serunuwara division. Two houses were destroyed in SLAF bombing, according to S. Elilan, LTTE's Trincomalee District Political Head. Colombo has chosen, according to SLAF spokesperson, to bomb the area following a dispute over water supply from Verukal river.

Verukal river is a branch of Sri Lanka's longest river Mahaweli. Vaakarai region encompasses a large expanse of land north of Navalady Junction extending 50 km to the Verugal River. [TamilNet]

Appapillai Amirthalingam The Tragedy of Moderate Politics

By: Siva Sivapragasam



(This article is being published in commemoration of the Death Anniversary of Mr. Amirthalingam)

When the mantle of leadership and succession of the TULF fell on Appapillai Amirthalingam after the death of Chelvanayagam little did he realize that it would end up with tight rope walking between moderate and militant politics. Having been nurtured in the Gandhian politics of non-violence at the feet of his guru Chelvanayagam moderate politics was the order of the day for him. His student days at the University brought him close to Marxist ideology championed by LSSP leaders like Dr.N.M.Perera and Dr.Colvin R.De Silva. But on leaving the University and becoming a lawyer he was swayed to Tamil politics espousing the cause of a

Federal state for Sri Lanka. The death of S.J.V.Chelvanayagam and G.G.Ponnambalam who dominated post-independence Tamil politics brought Amirthalingam into the forefront to lead the Tamil people. Amirthalingam became more known among the Tamil and Sinhalese people specially during the Sinhala Only days when he was mercilessly attacked by Sinhala hoodlums at the Satyagraha campaign in Galle Face green. He entered Parliament with the injuries and the then Prime Minister Bandaranaike sarcastically remarked that the injuries "were honourable wounds of war"

It could be said that from this time onwards the 'war' between the Sinhalese and Tamils had begun.Unlike the previous Tamil leaders like



Chelvanayagam, Amirthalingam with Periyar in Tamil Nadu (India)

Chelvanayagam and Ponnambalam, Amirthalingam was deep rooted in the Jaffna soil and was closer to the heartbeats of the people since he was practising in the Northern courts. The soft-spoken but an elegant orator Amirthalingam was an advocate of non-violence. The social and academic background in which he was nurtured saw him depend on a negotiated settlement for the problems of the Tamils. Perhaps this was one of the reasons that made him accept the position of the Leader of the Opposition after the 1977 elections. The then President J.R. Jayewardene who was referred to as the "cunning fox" in politics offered him the perks associated with the position of the Leader of the Opposition hoping to sway Amirthalingam to his way of thinking. But unfortunately for J.R. Amirthalingam was made of sterner stuff. He refused to be cowed down to J.R's manipulations.

For his intelligence, patience and soft nature Amirthalingam was pet named Dharmar, the great hero in the Maha Bharatha epic. He did display these characteristics with finesse in his discussions and dealings on political matters. The intransigence of extremist politicians and the wavering attitudes of elected governments made the youth movements among the Tamil



Amirthalingam, Chelvanayagam with Nehru and Indra Gandhi

community move towards militancy. Thus Amirthalingam was caught between moderation and militancy. Nurtured in Gandhian politics under the patronage of his Guru Thanthai Chelva Amirthalingam could not subscribe to the politics of militancy. At the same time he knew that he was not gong far in obtaining the rights of the Tamils from the Sinhala Governments. However he achieved one thing-He made the world and specially India know of the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka and helped to internationalize the issue.

Perhaps when the dust and the heat on this conflict between the two communities settle down one day and sanity prevails on those opposing the settlement of the ethnic strife, persons like Appapillai Amirthalingam who laboured through out their life for peace and harmony will be remembered in the pages of History as a tragedy in moderate politics. It can be said of Amirthalingam that while he imbibed the sweet smell of success in

India to play a more active role in resolving Sri Lankan Ethnic conflict?

The recent visit of Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran to Sri Lanka and Ranil Wickremasinghe's (Sri Lankan Opposition party leader) sudden visit to India seem to suggest that the Indian Government is taking a more serious view of the Sri Lankan conflict pushed by both domestic and external pressure.



Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran seen with Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse

The mounting domestic pressure for India to get more involved with the problem stems from the high flow of refugees to Rameswaram coupled with the interest shown by political parties in Tamilnadu over the recent events in Sri Lanka, particularly in the North and East. Even Karunanithi ,the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu who had maintained silence over the Sri Lankan problem has now begun to speak out and even cajoled the Indian Prime Minister over the issue when he met him in New Delhi.

Although Norway has been playing a vibrant role as a peace-maker over the recent times much headway has not been made in bringing about a consensus in the thinking between the two warring parties. Norway has reached a no-way situation so to speak. Who then is to bell the cat? "Big-Brother "across the Palk Strait! and the ball

seems to fall back again on the Indian court.This is why there is a pilgrimage of politicians from Sri Lanka and Tamilnadu to Delhi. India still pins its hopes of dialogue to resolve the problem and has even suggested to share its experience of a Federal model with changes to suit the Sri Lankan scenario. Although there was talk of defense co-operation between the two countries it is certain that Indian intervention "militarily" is ruled out. However Indian intervention or a more positive role by India will also be viewed with suspicion by extremist forces like the JVP whose Secretary has blurted out recently that India is trying to overthrow the Rajapakse Government and bring back Ranil Wickremasinghe.

The coming weeks may see further developments.

The Story of V.S.O.A. and Old Arrack in Canada

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"The Sri Lankan community is an exciting and vibrant one and V.S.O.A. and Old Arrack are representative of just how highly premium products from Sri Lanka are viewed by the International community," said Delano De Silva, General Manager of The Stonewall Company. "As a relatively young country, Canada has always looked for the very best the world has to offer and V.S.O.A.and Old Arrack fit into that category."

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'Parijatham': Director K.Bhagyaraj returns to the big screen

When filming began for 'Parijatham', many in Kodambakkam were uncertain whether Bhagyaraj understood the pulse of today's audience, but the slow success of the movie, which is also a launch vehicle of his daughter Saranya, shows he is still a director to reckon with. And what a dream debut it is for Saranya. She exemplars' enormous talent and



staged a spectacular comeback. He is not the hero in the film unlike in the past but he scripted and directed this captivating romantic tale. It is a standout film in many respects. It is markedly different of the old formula that goes into the making of a run of the mill Tamil film. Violence, a super hero defying all odds, and even double entendres which used to be Bhagyaraj's hallmark in his good old days are all barren in 'Parijatham'.

When responding to questions whether the tastes and preferences of audience changing, recently Bhagyaraj said, 'Certainly not. Audience have always been receptive to good films. Movies with strong storyline and script have always clicked'.

A good movie should have a good story, an engrossing script and artistes who can give life to the whole idea conceived by the director, he adds.

The outcome of the mellow drama 'Parijatham' is enhanced by the brilliant performance of the artistes. It is smart work on the part of the veteran director who has obviously taken extra care to ensure that his daughter makes her debut on the silver screen with a splash.

Incidentally Kalaipuli S Thanu is currently producing 'Sakarai Katti', which marks the debut venture of Santhanu Bhagyaraj, son of actor-director Bhagyaraj.

For now, 'Parijatham' is the 'make you feel good movie'. Fans say the film leaves behind a lingering fragrance.

potential. If she can do so well in her maiden entry, cinemagoers can be assured that there will be many more dazzling releases starring her in the future.

'Parijatham' features Prithviraj in the lead role with Saranya, and is witnessing a decent run according to Kodambakkam reports. The audience especially seems to enjoy every moment of the light, humorous and fun-filled first half.

Director K.Bhagyaraj used to turn out block busters with astonishing regularity. Among them is 'Mundanai Mudicchu', which introduced Malayalam actress Urvashi. His line up includes 'Mouna Geetham' with Saritha and the super hit "Antha Ezhu Natkall" with Ambika.

Now several years later, Bhagyaraj has



"Forget unpleasantness, move on"

Pandiarajan

By S.R. Ashok Kumar

"This celluloid medium has taught me to forget unpleasantness"



R. Pandiarajan came to the film industry as a homegrown product — he hails from Chennai, Saidapet to be exact. He wanted to act in films. But due to his height and appearance he decided to join as an assistant director. Fresh from directing the film, Kaivantha Kalai, in which he has introduced his son, Preethi, the actor-director talks about his film career and also his recent move.

I am a person ready to face anything that comes my way — an attitude I developed after entering cinema. The celluloid medium has taught me a number of things, mainly to forget unpleasantness and move on.

I joined Thamizisai College (on the first floor of Annamalai Mandram) where I learnt violin and got my diploma as "Isai Selvam" in 1977. After that I joined writer Thooyavan as an office assistant. Here I met director K. Bhagyaraj and later joined him as an assistant director. I became his associate director in Darling Darling Darling and worked till the discussion of Munthanai Mudichu.

While at school, there was this particular year when our school did not get any medal. But when I was about to stage a play, an announcement was made that the best play would get a medal. My play got it. It was then I realised that people were ready to see me act.

My first directorial venture was Kanni Rasi in 1985. I got introduced as a hero in Aan Paavam. Till now, I have directed nine films, including Kaivantha Kalai, and acted in some 90 Tamil films and one Malayalam hit Kathavaseshan, where I acted with Dilip.

I became a film director when I was 21. Now, my son Preethi has entered films

as an actor at just 17. I am proud that he has won accolades.

I finished my M.A. in 2002. I am now doing M.Phil (History) at Annamalai University and my dissertation is titled Tamil cinema — a critical study. I have also written two books, Thedal and Thookam Varathabodhu Sindhithavai.

I am proud that I introduced a number of actors and technicians including Srikanth Deva (music director) Nithya (cameraman), Thotta Banu (art director) and Seetha, Kollankudi Karuppayi, Debashree Roy (all actors).

My favourite stars are Sivaji Ganesan, MGR and Sridevi. Among directors it is Mani Ratnam.

In fact, he participated in the 100th day function of Gopala Gopala. He said his first three films did not work out satisfactorily. At that time, a producer approached him to do a movie. He asked the producer whether he was aware that his films were flops and whether he had seen the movies. The answer was a big 'no'. Why then did the producer insist on him doing the film, he asked.

The producer told him that it was Pandiarajan who asked him to book Mani Ratnam as director and seek his dates. Mani Ratnam narrated this in the presence of my guru K. Bhagyaraj, Vairamuthu and others. I was literally moved to tears. He is a world-renowned director and his words still ring in my ears. [Hinduonnet]



An evening with devotional songs on August 7th, 2006 in Toronto
'Isai Peroli', 'Nada Bhushnam', 'Kalaimamani'

Sri. P. Unnikrishnan

(Popular Cine Playback Singer) Details on Page 2



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